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New York

President:	Mr. Alemu	(Ethiopia)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Zambrana
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bangladesh and Myanmar to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Thaung Tun, Special Envoy of the State Counsellor and National Security Adviser of Myanmar.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I welcome this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the crisis in Myanmar.

On 2 September, I wrote to the Council urging concerted efforts to prevent further escalation of the crisis in northern Rakhine state. I am encouraged that the Council has discussed the situation four times in less than a month.

The reality on the ground demands action - swift action - to protect people, alleviate suffering, prevent further instability, address the root causes of the situation and forge, at long last, a durable solution. The following briefing is based on our reporting from the ground and is our best sense of what has happened, what is still happening and what needs to be done.

The current crisis has steadily deteriorated since the 25 August attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army on the Myanmar security forces. I repeat my condemnation of those attacks today. Since then, the situation has spiralled into the world's fastest-developing refugee emergency and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare. I continue to call on the Myanmar authorities to take three immediate steps: first, to end the military operations; secondly, to allow unfettered access for humanitarian support; and thirdly, to ensure the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of the refugees to their areas of origin.

Let me now review what we know about the military operations that have taken place since 25 August.

While there have been competing narratives in a highly complex environment, certain elements are clear. At least 500,000 civilians have fled their homes and sought safety in Bangladesh. Although the total number of those displaced is unknown, it is estimated that 94 per cent of them are Rohingya. The devastating humanitarian situation is not only a breeding ground for radicalization, it also puts vulnerable people, including young children, at risk of falling prey to criminal elements, including trafficking. We have received bone-chilling accounts from those who fled, mainly women, children and the elderly. These testimonials point to excessive violence and serious violations of human rights, including the indiscriminate firing of weapons, the presence of landmines and sexual violence. This is unacceptable and must end immediately.

International human rights law and standards are clear: any use of force by the authorities must respect Myanmar's human rights obligations under international law and comply with well- established human rights standards. Above all, these actions must fully respect the human rights of those affected, regardless of ethnicity or religion. The use of lethal force, even in situations of emergency, must be commensurate with the threat to the public order, and utmost care must be taken to minimize injury and loss of life, especially for unarmed people and communities.

The authorities have claimed that security operations ended on 5 September, following major displacements in northern Rakhine, where Rohingya were the majority. However, displacement appears to have continued, with reports of the burning of Muslim villages, as well as looting and acts of intimidation. The Myanmar authorities themselves have indicated that at least 176 of 471 Muslim villages in northern Rakhine have been totally abandoned.

In Rathedaung township, three quarters of the Rohingya population has fled. Most villages and all three of the former internally displaced-persons camps have been burnt to the ground. Just five isolated Muslim communities remain in Rathedaung. Elsewhere too, a majority of the abandoned villages were majority Muslim.

There seems to be a deeply disturbing pattern to the violence and the ensuing large movements of an ethnic group from their homes. The failure to address that systematic violence could result in a spill-over into central Rakhine state, where an additional 250,000

Muslims could potentially face displacement. They are outnumbered by the Rakhine communities, some of whom have engaged in violent acts of vigilantism against their Muslim neighbours.

The violence in Rakhine — whether by the military or by radical elements within communities — must end. The Myanmar authorities must fulfil their fundamental obligation to ensure the safety and security of all communities and to uphold the rule of law without discrimination.

Let me now turn to the question of humanitarian access. It is imperative that United Nations agencies and our non-governmental partners be granted immediate and safe access to all affected communities. I am deeply concerned by the current climate of antagonism towards the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. Indeed, that can lead to unacceptable violence, such as the recent attacks against the International Committee of the Red Cross by Rakhine villagers in Sittwe.

The Myanmar authorities have said repeatedly over the past few days that it is not the right time for unhindered access to resume. Given the enormous needs, that position is deeply regrettable. The United Nations should be allowed to reach the affected areas without delay.

I would also like to address the issue of the safe return of refugees to their places of origin. I ask members of the Security Council to join me in urging that all those who have fled to Bangladesh be able to exercise their right to a safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return to their homes. Myanmar authorities have committed to using the framework established in the 1992 Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar to facilitate such returns. While that may be a useful starting point, it is not sufficient in the present circumstances.

Notably, the framework does not refer to resolving the root cause of displacement. Moreover, it requires documents that the fleeing Rohingya may not be able to provide. The United Nations is committed to a plan for voluntary return and calls upon the international community to support such an effort. That should include development assistance to the villages of those who return home, and the implementation of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State's recommendations regarding verification and citizenship.

Voluntary repatriation also requires, as a critical first step, the registration of refugees in Bangladesh, using internationally accepted standards. The United Nations is ready to support Myanmar and Bangladesh in all stages of this important process. Ensuring the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees to Rakhine — in line with international refugee law — will require the restoration of mutual trust among the communities.

Improving intercommunal relations is a critical part of a sustainable resolution to the crisis and one of the essential recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Kofi Annan. In this highly complex environment, the Myanmar authorities must work to defuse tension and uphold and protect the rights of all communities, including the respect for property rights. Those who fled should be able to return to their homes in peace and not have to face yet another cycle of violence. It will be especially important to avoid relocating those displaced yet again to camp-like conditions.

In Bangladesh, the United Nations continues to step up its humanitarian response. The High Commissioner for Refugees visited just days ago. In the next two weeks, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF will visit the Bangladesh border area. On 9 October, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, OCHA and IOM will convene a donors' conference.

In my meeting last week with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Hasina, I expressed great appreciation for the care being provided to refugees. I commend the countries that are supporting Bangladesh in its response. Let me also stress the need for strengthened cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh. In that regard, I welcome the coming high-level visit of Myanmar officials to Bangladesh

The crisis has generated multiple implications for neighbouring States and the larger region, including the risk of intercommunal strife. We should not be surprised if the decades of discrimination and double standards in the treatment of the Rohingya create openings for radicalization.

In moving forward, we need an effective partnership with the Myanmar authorities, especially the military. All involved parties should refrain from any actions

that could exacerbate the precarious situation on the ground. I welcome the participation here today of National Security Adviser U Thaung Tun — as well as the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, Mr. Masud Bin Momen. I appreciate the National Security Adviser's efforts to engage in dialogue with various stakeholders during the high-level week of the General Assembly.

In addition to discussions with the Secretariat on future cooperation, the Myanmar delegation has reached out to Bangladesh to revive dialogue. Myanmar has also called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for desperately needed humanitarian assistance. I look forward to an effective and credible follow up to the authorities' stated commitment to greater access, including for the international community, the media and humanitarian actors. Regional cooperation with Myanmar will also be essential, and the United Nations fully stands behind it.

I welcome the important role played by Foreign Minister Marsudi of Indonesia in that respect. She has been advocating an approach that echoes the three steps that I have been emphasizing and that is also what many countries have been seeking.

The crisis has underlined an urgent need for a political solution to the root causes of the violence. The core of the problem is protracted statelessness and its associated discrimination. The recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State provide a blueprint for the longer-term future.

The Muslims of Rakhine state should be granted nationality. The present Myanmar citizenship legislation only allows partial citizenship. We encourage Myanmar to revise that legislation in line with the international standards. In the interim, an effective verification exercise, as previously foreseen, should enable those so entitled to be granted citizenship under the present laws. All others must be able to obtain a legal status that allows them to lead a normal life, including freedom of movement and access to labour markets, education and health services. I appeal to the leaders of Myanmar, including military leaders, to condemn incitement to racial hatred and violence, and to take all measures to defuse tensions between communities.

We have taken good note of declarations by the Myanmar authorities that no one is above the law. There is a clear need to ensure accountability for the perpetrators of human rights violations, to curb the current violence and to prevent future abuses.

The United Nations will remain a close partner to Myanmar in addressing those urgent issues. We have no agenda other than to help Myanmar advance the well-being of all the country's people. We have no interest other than to see all communities enjoying peace, security, prosperity and mutual respect. And we are committed to nothing less than easing the heart-breaking suffering of so many vulnerable people — while forging a lasting solution that affirms shared values, promotes mutual respect and upholds human dignity. I call on the Security Council to stand united and support our efforts to urgently end this tragedy.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank the Secretary General for his briefing and for all that he has done to bring this issue before the Security Council.

As a long-standing friend of the Burmese people, the United Kingdom has watched in horror at the violence that has erupted over the past month. What began as a series of attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army has spiralled into an acute humanitarian crisis, one which now poses a threat to stability and security in the region.

We have all heard the reports. We have all heard of the extrajudicial killings and the burning of villages. We have heard of the cruelty, the sexual violence and the landmines laid along routes taken by refugees. Half a million people have fled, many bearing the scars of the violence. The vast majority are Rohingya Muslims, although they also include Buddhists, Hindus and other minorities, but make no mistake — this is a human tragedy and an acute humanitarian crisis that has exploded with almost unprecedented speed.

At the outset, I want to pay tribute to the Government and the people of Bangladesh for providing safety and shelter to so many until they can return safely, voluntarily and sustainably to their homes in Burma. I also want to acknowledge the important diplomatic efforts undertaken by Indonesia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations.

It is becoming increasingly clear that world opinion, whether among countries or international organizations, is coming together on this issue. In the face of such opinion, it falls on Burma, in particular the Burmese military, to respond. The Burmese military bear the primary responsibility for resolving this crisis, but there is a way out.

First, the Burmese military under Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing must immediately stop the violence in Rakhine state and ensure the protection of all civilians, including the Rohingya. In this Chamber, I repeat my Government's condemnation of the attacks carried out by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army last month, but military operations in response have been excessive, and vigilante groups have carried out sectarian violence unchecked. That cannot continue. The hate speech and incitement to violence must stop. The Burmese military must act immediately and uphold the rule of law. We are particularly concerned to ensure that the violence does not spread to central Rakhine.

Secondly, the Burmese authorities need to grant United Nations agencies and their partners full and unhindered humanitarian access to Rakhine State. We welcome the Government's cooperation with humanitarian agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, and we welcome the efforts of the Red Cross to respond to the crisis. But the humanitarian needs inside Rakhine state vastly exceed the capacity of the Red Cross. Only United Nations agencies and their partners can provide urgent life-saving assistance on the scale required. We believe that the authorities should tone down the anti-United Nations rhetoric and stop it immediately in State media outlets.

Thirdly, Burma should work with Bangladesh to establish a safe, voluntary and sustainable way for those who have fled Rakhine to return to their homes. We welcome the civilian Government's commitment to the right of return, but previous arrangements have been inadequate. A process is needed that allows those who have fled to register as refugees. It needs to be a process that acknowledges that many fled without documents, or never had them in the first place, a process that allows people to return to their homes and places of origin safely, voluntarily and sustainably. We welcome the willingness of the United Nations to support this endeavour.

Fourthly, the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State must be implemented swiftly and in full. We welcome the Burmese authorities' public commitment to that and the establishment of the ministerial Implementation Committee for the recommendations on Rakhine State. It is essential that we now see progress, particularly on citizenship.

Fifthly, we urge the Burmese authorities to cooperate with the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar established by the Human Rights Council. If the Burmese authorities have any doubt about what is happening, that is how reports can be independently verified and those responsible held to account.

The Council considers many crises around the world, but the situation in Burma strikes many of us around this table with particular poignancy. Many of us here today have stood by the people of Burma for long years, have watched the inspiring steps taken towards democracy and have welcomed the country back into the international community with open arms.

Given our history and long-standing friendship with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, we remain committed to Burma and to all of its people. We want to see further progress towards democracy, and we want Burma to thrive within the international community. Our commitment is the reason that we speak so frankly today in this Chamber. This crisis now casts a deep shadow over Burma's international reputation, on its leaders and on its military. The Burmese authorities must now take the decisions that will decide their place in history. They can choose to end the violence, protect civilians and defend human rights They can choose to allow humanitarian access, including by the United Nations. They can work with Bangladesh on the return of refugees, and they can address the long-term issues raised by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. But should they fail to do so, they will find themselves on the wrong side of history, and the Council must then be ready to take further action.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

For over four weeks, the world has endured images from Burma that we should never have to see. Much more importantly, we have seen images of acts that no person should ever have to endure. We have seen terrified women and children fleeing from their homes with only the clothes on their back. We have watched people drown trying to cross rivers to safety. We have

seen bodies floating down rivers and villages burned to the ground. We have heard reports of men, women and children rounded up and detained, and some brutally killed. We saw the haunting image of a young mother and father cradling the body of their infant son, a baby who died fleeing the violence in Rakhine State.

Secretary Tillerson has spoken with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. I also met with Burma's National Security Advisor during the recent week of high-level meetings at the General Assembly. We have tried to engage the Burmese military at the highest levels. We have supported regional efforts to de-escalate the violence and expand humanitarian access. And still the exodus of terrified, injured people out of Burma continues, while the Government refuses to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation. Now hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees remain in Bangladesh as they are in fear of returning to their homes. Burmese leaders must come to terms with the facts on the ground.

When we last met to consider the Burmese crisis, I expressed our condemnation of the 25 August attacks against security posts. I reiterate that condemnation today. I also condemn reported violence against other minority communities in Rakhine state. But what has happened since then dwarfs those attacks with its disproportionate, indiscriminate violence. We cannot be afraid to call the actions of the Burmese authorities what they appear to be — a brutal sustained campaign to cleanse the country of an ethnic minority, and it should shame senior Burmese leaders who have sacrificed so much for an open democratic Burma.

The Burmese Government claims that it is battling terrorists. If this is true, let it allow media and humanitarian access to back up its claims. If terrorists are the problem, let the military explain how killing children and forcing families from their homes will make Burma any safer. The Burmese military have ignored calls to respond to such attacks by focusing on identifying and prosecuting the perpetrators. Instead what is taking place is a brutal assault that does not advance justice in Burma. It puts the country further out of reach.

The Government's response has undermined Burma's security stability and its fragile democratic transition. The Government has a responsibility to restore the rule of law and prevent attacks by citizens in its name. That responsibility holds regardless of what individual or group is the target of such attacks. An already dire situation has been made even worse by some of the rhetoric coming from official military channels inside Burma, Worse, that language encourages ugly views among the Burmese people. History has shown us what happens when such views go unopposed. The time for well-meaning diplomatic words in the Council has passed. We must now consider action against the Burmese security forces, who are implicated in abuse and in stoking hatred among their fellow citizens.

The actions needed now to resolve this crisis are very clear.

First, the Burmese military must respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Those who have been accused of committing abuses should be removed from command responsibilities immediately and prosecuted for wrongdoing. Any country that is currently providing weapons to the Burmese military should suspend such activities until sufficient accountability measures are in place.

Secondly, the Burmese authorities must immediately allow rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for United Nations agencies and other relief organizations. We have noted the Government's decision to work with the International Red Cross to distribute aid, but the Government has not allowed other relief organizations meaningful access to northern Rakhine state. If the Burmese authorities are sincere about wanting those displaced to come home, why would they not want food and treatment to get to those people? The Government needs to work with all partners who can help to get assistance to all affected communities. Otherwise, there is a significant danger that life-saving assistance will be delayed in reaching those who need it the most.

Thirdly and finally, the Government must commit to welcoming all displaced persons to return to their original homes. We were glad to see the commitment made by the State Counsellor during her state-of-the-union address to allow those who fled the violence to voluntarily return to their homes when it is safe to do so. We will all watch to see if the Government follows through on that pledge. We call on Burmese officials to work with the Government of Bangladesh to develop a framework for returns as agreed to by both Governments, an idea that enjoys international support.

In the meantime, we have seen the generosity of the Bangladeshi Government in accepting and sheltering

Burmese refugees. The United States is providing $95 million to support urgent humanitarian needs in Burma and Bangladesh, but, given the likelihood of more people fleeing across the border, plus the ongoing monsoon season and the humanitarian need already present in Bangladesh, such generosity will not be enough. The risk that the conflict will spill over to other countries in the region is real. Additional support will be needed to head off a wider conflict. What is perhaps most frustrating about the conflict is the fact that we should have seen it coming. The various communities in Rakhine state have had periods of peaceful coexistence, but they have also seen periods of extreme violence and, between such outbursts, the Rohingya have suffered discrimination and have been denied basic rights as citizens of Burma.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to speak directly to the Burmese people. I would like to appeal to the goodness and hope for the future that exists in the hearts of the overwhelming majority of them. So many of them have sacrificed so much for a better country. I know they are sickened by the images of violence coming from Burma and being seen around the world, but the goal of an open, democratic Burma is still possible. We urge them to hold fast to that vision, not to give up on it and not to be satisfied with leaders who give up on it either. Every Burmese man, woman and child is a child of God with equal moral standing. They should stay strong in that belief, and they will have the future they dreamed of — the future they deserve.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation is pleased that the Security Council finally decided to hold a public briefing on the dangerous situation that has been developing in Rakhine state for many months now. It is a situation that has reached an unprecedented level since the unacceptable attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army against the Myanmar security forces.

The tragedy is indeed unsustainable. Hundreds of thousands of people, mostly children, women and older people, are fleeing violence and abuses of all types, which have just been described, to seek refuge and safety where they can, especially in neighbouring Bangladesh. We take this opportunity to commend the generosity and courage of the people and authorities of Bangladesh for welcoming the unfortunate Rohingya.

Senegal has already expressed its deep-seated concern with regard to the situation of the Rohingya and has strongly condemned the violence that they are being subjected to. The President of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Macky Sall, referred to the issue in a joint statement with the President of Turkey, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Speaking at the rostrum of the General Assembly on 20 September, our President said,

> "in Burma we are seriously concerned by the violence against the Rohingya Muslim people. As outrage is never a selective emotion, Senegal strongly urges the international community to take action to put an end to this genuine human tragedy" (*A/72/PV.10*).

Several speakers launched the same appeal from the same rostrum last week.

It is therefore fortunate that the Security Council has heeded such an urgent call to action and has acceded to the joint request made by Senegal, Egypt, Sweden, Kazakhstan, the United Kingdom, France and the United States, calling on the Council to meet in this format and exchange views, in full transparency and bearing full responsibility, on the growing threat to international peace and security, with the participation of the representatives of the two States that are most directly affected, namely, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

I would like to congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres, who very early undertook discreet steps to defuse the crisis, which was breaking out, and stop it from getting out of control. He visited the region and met with several leaders and stakeholders. Fully assuming the responsibility given him by the Charter of the United Nations to become involved and to prevent an outbreak or escalation of a conflict, the Secretary-General, on 2 September, wrote to the members of the Security Council to draw their attention to their responsibility with regard to the situation, namely, to send a strong message highlighting the need to provide the necessary constructive support and cooperation aimed at devising a political strategy to put an end to the vicious circle in Rakhine state. He also insisted on the importance of restraint and calm in our efforts to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and ensure full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as the importance of the continued presence and security of United Nations agencies and personnel and other partners .

The statement of the Secretary-General this afternoon sheds further light on the many challenges, including humanitaria and security issues, in this

very complex situation. Other important figures, other States and other international bodies have been deployed and continue to take action aimed at putting an end to the tragedy of the Rohingyas, stopping the violence and helping refugees and displaced persons to return voluntarily and securely to their land and homes. In addition to the neighbouring countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has also been very active, including through its Contact Group on the Rohingya Muslim Minority, and has spared no effort in seeking a fair and lasting solution to the crisis.

On the ground with the refugees, in Geneva at the level of the Human Rights Council, and even in New York with the Secretary-General, the General Assembly and the Security Council, the OIC, of which the Senegal is a founding and active member, has brought parties together and called for diplomatic initiatives, along with concrete humanitarian assistance. That was eloquently reflected in the report that sanctioned the ministerial meeting of the Contact Group held last week in New York on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly on 19 September 2017.

So what has the Security Council done, and especially what must it do in the light of the statement we have just heard from the Secretary-General and the reports, as well as those we will hear from the representatives of Myanmar and Bangladesh?

After the preliminary discussions we had on this subject under "Any other business", it appears to us that the time has come to undertake substantive discussions — in private consultations — and decide how we are going follow up on this briefing. Thanks to the courageous recommendations set forth in the final report of Kofi Annan's Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, which was requested by the Government of Myanmar itself and which the Government has also boldly committed itself to implementing, we now know much more about the root causes of the conflict and the ways and means of resolving it on a lasting basis.

Without prejudice to what we might decide to do or not to do after today's exchanges of views, the Senegalese delegation would first like to reiterate its firm condemnation of the violence that has been unleashed in the state of Rakhine in Myanmar, from whatever side it comes, including unacceptable attacks on the Myanmar defence and security forces by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army armed movement. Let there be no mistake: the unwavering support and active solidarity that Senegal has rightly expressed for and with the Rohingyas, who are considered by the United Nations to be the most persecuted religious minority in the world, leaves no room for acceptance of terrorist acts.

The clarity and unity of the international community's appeals to the Government of Burma reflects the urgency and seriousness of this situation, which is also likely to fuel violent extremism. The OIC, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the European Union have all condemned the indiscriminate and disproportionate repression facing the Rohingyas. Meeting at the summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 10 and 11 September, the leaders of the OIC denounced the violence and called for an independent investigation into all cases of human rights violations committed against the Rohingya minority. Accordingly, three major objectives should, we believe, guide our thinking.

First, military operations should be stopped so as to put an end to the campaign against the Rohingyas and also to make a clear distinction between the rebels and the civilian population. Appropriate measures should therefore be taken to ensure that all those found guilty of abuses are held to account.

Secondly, international humanitarian law must be scrupulously respected in order to ensure full, unconditional and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance and the dignified and voluntary return of refugees to their provinces and villages of origin. In that regard, we take note of the commitment and willingness of the Government of Myanmar to work closely with Bangladesh based on the experiences of the 1993 working group set up by the two countries.

Thirdly, there must be a definitive resolution with regard to the discriminatory treatment of the Rohingyas; that resolution should focus on the root causes of the violence, including the issue of nationality, which is inextricably linked to ethnicity by a 1982 law that made that minority the largest Stateless group in the world.

Senegal strongly urges Myanmar to fully implement the recommendations contained in the Annan Commission report. We continue to hope that the report will serve as a framework conducive to the creation of a society where the rejection and disapproval of the other gives way to openness to dialogue. That is the only way that Myanmar, all ethnic groups and religions combined, can preserve and enrich the state

of Rakhine's long and proud history and rich cultural tradition and commit to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one of whose essential objectives is to establish peaceful societies where no one is left behind. That is the wish of a country like Senegal, whose belief in dialogue among peoples of all ethnic groups, races, religions, languages is a long-standing and principal feature of our foreign policy that has withstood the test of time.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my deep thanks to the Secretary-General for being present with us at today's important meeting and for his comprehensive briefing.

We meet this afternoon to discuss the repercussions of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, which, with all its religious, ethnic, political and historic complications, is a humanitarian emergency that has imposed itself on the international community. During this crisis, hundreds of thousands of innocent people have been killed, persecuted and ethnically cleansed. Almost half a million people since 25 August have been forced to flee and become displaced from their towns and villages out of fear for their lives. Regional security in the crisis area has been dangerously threatened, which has created tensions and imposed a heavy burden on the neighbouring countries, in particular Bangladesh.

Egypt believes that the international position on the crisis must be based on a set of principles that remain vital in the way we view the crisis, its root causes and the means to contain it. These principles include the following.

First, the issue is humanitarian at heart and is based on the principle of the acceptance of others and on coexistence among religions without discrimination based on race or religion. Any belief that the forced displacement of a part of Myanmar's population to neighbouring countries could end the crisis is absurd. It does not take into account any of the legal or humanitarian principles that govern our modern world, as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Secondly, hate speech, violence or the threat of the use of violence cannot be accepted by any party. We reject them totally, whether they are perpetrated by a party or a Government institution that bears the main responsibility for protecting individuals and ending violence by all possible means.

Thirdly, the message we are sending to the Government of Myanmar today is a message from the entire international community, urging it to shoulder its responsibility and take immediate actions to end violence and allow for humanitarian access. It must embark on a dialogue with the relevant United Nations entities and neighbouring countries so as to ensure the return of refugees and displaced persons to their place of origin within Myanmar in line with the recommendations of Kofi Annan's Advisory Committee.

Fourthly, our unconditional solidarity with the Rohingyas as human beings who have the right to live their lives in safety and security does not mean in any way that we support any organization or militia that chooses terrorism under the pretext of protecting the residents of Rakhine state. However, at the same time, we must ask ourselves what choice we are leaving to those innocent people other than to take up arms to defend themselves.

The Security Council must shoulder its responsibility with respect to this dangerous crisis. Egypt has taken urgent international steps in that regard. Moreover, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif has condemned the crimes against the Rohingyas and called for the need to end the humanitarian tragedy as soon as possible. Those are the principles that we must adopt in order to address the crisis and its negative repercussions. Today, in view of the current situation, Egypt stresses the need to act along the following lines.

First, it is urgent for the Myanmar Government to shoulder its moral and humanitarian responsibility and to swiftly address the crisis by ending all military actions by the Myanmar Army and by allowing refugees to return to their territories within Rakhine state, having fled the ongoing exacerbated crisis.

Secondly, through United Nations mechanisms, especially those providing relief and refugee protection, we must provide assistance to those affected on the borders between Myanmar and Bangladesh. In that regard, I would like to commend the people and the Government of Bangladesh for their patience and their efforts to overcome the repercussions of this humanitarian crisis.

Thirdly, we once again call upon the Government of Myanmar to positively interact with the international community, to allow for a high-level United Nations delegation to visit Rakhine state and to consider ways to provide field humanitarian support. It must work

to provide the Muslim Rohingyas with the right to a nationality and the right to return to their territories and their homes.

Fourthly, we express to the Government of Myanmar our readiness to host any national dialogue in an official governmental or non-governmental framework such as the umbrella of the Muslim Council of Elders under the leadership of the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, which is the forum that already hosted a dialogue among Myanmar youth from different sects in January.

In conclusion, I stress the need for an implementable United Nations road map and the need to speak in one unified voice so as to make the necessary impact. The refugee tragedy could go on for a long time, until calm returns and a fair and final settlement is explicitly reached that provides the right to citizenship to the Rohingyas. Until that moment, we call upon the Council and the international community to take swift action to offer help and alleviate the suffering of those refugees and to protect their souls and their humanitarian rights.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank you, Mr. President, and I thank the Secretary-General for his very clear briefing and for his leadership in responding to the situation and the crisis in Myanmar. As Minister Margot Wallström said in the General Assembly last week (see A/72/PV.16), the situation in Myanmar is a haunting example of where the seeds of conflict have gone unresolved, with tragic consequences. Once again, we see the human cost of not investing enough in prevention.

The crisis in Rakhine state, which has existed for decades, has dramatically escalated. The situation is now critical, with devastating humanitarian consequences, and there are clear implications for regional stability. Two thirds of the estimated Rohingya population in Rakhine state is now in Bangladesh. The level of displacement has led to a crisis described by High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi as the most urgent refugee emergency in the world today.

Those arriving in Bangladesh have given horrific and heart-breaking accounts of unimaginable violence and abuse. Reports of sexual and gender-based violence are gravely worrying. In addition, large numbers of people, including non-Muslims, have been displaced within Rakhine. However, the total number of internally displaced people has not been established. Their level of need is unknown, owing to the lack of access.

Let me take a moment here to pay tribute to the Government of Bangladesh for their hospitality and generosity to the refugees. I also thank the humanitarian agencies for their swift response. My country has contributed significantly to efforts to increase the humanitarian response capacity in Bangladesh, and we call on others to do the same. The crisis in Rakhine state is complex and multidimensional. It requires a comprehensive and sustained response, with support from the international community. At the same time, in the light of the immediate needs of those displaced inside and outside the country, a number of issues now need to be addressed urgently.

First, we note the statement by the Government of Myanmar that security operations in Rakhine ceased on 5 September. However, displacement has continued since then. The continuing reports of violence are deeply worrying, including reports of the burning of Rohingya villages and of violence against civilians. We therefore call on Myanmar to ensure the immediate suspension of all military and security operations. All violence must end. The Government has the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of all communities without discrimination.

Secondly, we urge the Government to grant immediate, full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the United Nations and its partners in all areas, so that they can reach those in urgent need of life-saving assistance. The humanitarian actors are ready to respond. The assistance arrangements in northern Rakhine organized by the Red Cross Movement are insufficient to address the massive needs. We note ongoing discussions with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regarding the humanitarian response, and we also note and welcome the tireless efforts of the Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Ending the violence and ensuring access to all populations in need of humanitarian assistance is critical and urgent in order to save lives and prevent human suffering. However, that alone will not end the crisis. It is essential that the Government of Myanmar, with the support of the international community, now move swiftly to ensure that those who have fled the country can return to their places of origin in a safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable manner. Ensuring that refugees are registered in line with international standards will help facilitate that. People who decide to return must not be placed in camps or camp-like environments, which risk becoming long-term.

We welcome the Government's commitment to implement the recommendations set out in the report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State within the shortest time possible, and we urge it to do so without delay. Those recommendations provide a clear road map for addressing the root causes of this long-running crisis, most notably by addressing the situation of citizenship for the Rohingyas. Full implementation of the recommendations would deliver development and benefit all communities in Rakhine. Ending incitement, defusing intercommunal tension and rebuilding trust between the communities in Rakhine will be important in that regard.

Those responsible for human rights abuses and violations, as well as other crimes, must be brought to justice. It is important that the facts and circumstances on the ground be fully established. The Government must therefore engage with the fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Council, and we urge the Government to provide access without delay.

The international community stands ready to support the Government and people of Myanmar in their efforts to resolve the crisis in Rakhine state and to provide urgent humanitarian assistance. In that regard, we encourage the Government to cooperate with Bangladesh as well as to continue to engage with ASEAN. We also urge the Government to cooperate fully with the United Nations. The Government must work to counter narratives and rhetoric that seek to undermine the ability of the United Nations to do its work. Going forward, the United Nations also has the capacity and is ready to support the Government as it implements the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Kofi Annan.

It is now urgent to put an end to violence and to ensure immediate, full and safe humanitarian access. Safe and dignified return must be ensured as soon as the situation allows. At the same time, the decades-long cycle of violence and displacement suffered by the Rohingya people must be addressed. The report of the Advisory Commission provides the way forward. We urge the Government of Myanmar to take this opportunity to bring an end to the conflict once and for all, allowing the country to move forward with its important development efforts and to continue its democratic transition with all communities in peace. It is important too that the Council remain seized and stand united in finding and helping a peaceful resolution to this crisis.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, please allow me to warmly thank the Secretary-General for accepting the request put forward by France and six other Security Council members to brief us on the situation in Burma. On behalf of France, I would like to welcome the Secretary-General's personal commitment to this priority issue.

The terrible facts are before us. As President Macron reminded us at the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.4), ethnic cleansing is happening today in western Burma. Nearly 500,000 Rohingyas, the majority of whom are children and women, have fled Burma for Bangladesh in a month's time. More than 200 villages have been completely destroyed, while others have been set on fire so as to force people to flee and deter them from returning. Let us not be mistaken: the incitement to hatred and violence against the Rohingya people in Burma in the form of public speeches and other forms of stigmatization could lead to even worse atrocities, if we do not immediately end it. Faced with such a serious situation, the Security Council has the enormous responsibility to unite and act to break the negative spiral and urgently find a path leading towards a peaceful and political way out. To that end, our immediate efforts must be guided along two avenues.

Our first priority must be to end the violence. We call on all parties to immediately halt violence directed against civilians. We call on the Burma security forces — as it is incumbent upon them — to ensure the protection of all civilians without discrimination. The Burma authorities must also end the actions of self-proclaimed groups that are attacking the Rohingyas.

The second priority, which is inextricably dependent upon the first, is the restoration of safe and unhindered access for all humanitarian actors. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Myanmar Red Cross Society have been mobilized. They have delivered a significant amount of assistance, which, however, has been largely insufficient given the scope of what is needed. It is urgent that access be granted to United Nations agencies, the World Food Programme, UNICEF and other major non-governmental organizations, such as Médecins sans Frontières, which can provide emergency relief in a neutral, independent and impartial manner. The Government of Burma's initiative to organize a visit by diplomats and humanitarian organizations in Rakhine state is a step in the right direction. I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Office of the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, which are urgently addressing the influx of almost 500,000 people to Bangladesh.

The significant effort made by Bangladesh, which has welcomed almost 700,000 Rohingya, also deserves to be commended and supported by the international community. We encourage the Bangladeshi authorities to provide necessary access to all humanitarian actors according to the needs of the people.

I have just touched upon the most pressing challenges. Three other priorities, which are inextricably interlinked, also demand that we act because they are critical to finding a lasting solution to the crisis.

First, once we succeed in ending the violence, we will need to define precisely the modalities for the safe, voluntary and lasting return of the refugees.

The second priority will be to launch a political process as quickly as possible so as to address the root causes of the violence, including the systematic discrimination of the Rohingya people — who have been denied citizenship in Burma for decades — and the systematic violation of their rights. The final report submitted by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Mr. Kofi Annan, contains important recommendations concerning the subject. The commitment of the Burmese Government to implement determinedly and immediately those recommendations is a positive first step that must be translated into action. France reiterates its support for the civilian Government to pursue and consolidate the democratic transition process initiated in 2015. France also commends the work undertaken by countries of the region in search of a solution to the crisis.

The denial of the Rohingya's rights for decades has led to the radicalization of a minority among them. Civilians must not pay for the violence committed by an extremist group. That is why — and this is the third challenge — we cannot ignore the massive violations of human rights that may constitute crimes against humanity, as was stated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Those responsible for crimes should be brought to justice. For the time being, we call on the Burmese authorities to allow full access to all human rights monitoring bodies, in particular the fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council last March. That mission must be allowed to visit Myanmar and conduct an independent investigation of any violations committed, irrespective of the perpetrators. We reiterate this appeal today to the Burmese Government.

As France prepares to assume the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October, rest assured, Sir, of the full attention that it will accord to the situation in Burma. During the very first days of our mandate, in collaboration with the United Kingdom, we will organize an Arria Formula meeting — an open informal meeting of the Security Council — which will include Kofi Annan, among other key actors. That meeting, which will be open to everyone, will not only give a perspective of the situation on the ground for all participants, but will also address in more detail the recommendations of the Commission chaired by Kofi Annan and the means to act at our disposal. Moreover, we are continuing our work with our partners on the Council to show its firm and collective commitment, which France believes is crucial and urgent.

Allow me to conclude by citing the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State: "The status quo is not tenable". France will therefore remain ready to take the initiative for the Security Council to fully assume its responsibilities concerning this issue that, through this meeting, we wish to make a priority and a shared priority on which to take collective action.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I join previous speakers in thanking Secretary-General Guterres for his comprehensive briefing on the dire situation of the Rohingya people who have been forced to flee Rakhine state of Myanmar to neighbouring countries.

Kazakhstan is deeply concerned about the mass exodus from Myanmar, with almost half a million Rohingya crossing the border into Bangladesh within the short span of a month following the violence that erupted on 25 August. The saddest part of the tragedy is that children comprise approximately 60 per cent of those refugees. Unfortunately, there have been reports that a fresh influx of 14,000 refugees crossed the border into Bangladesh as recently as 24 September. The lack of measures to stop the flow of refugees calls into question Aung San Suu Kyi's statement that "there have been no clearance operations since 5 September". That serves as an additional justification and rationale for dispatching a United Nations fact-finding mission to assess objectively the current situation in Rakhine state.

Kazakhstan is closely monitoring the crisis in Rakhine state of Myanmar through its embassies in

the region and wishes to underscore the following key observations.

First, we urge the Government of Myanmar to suspend all military operations and halt acts of persecution and discriminatory practices against Rohingya Muslims. It is the obligation of every State to ensure the safety and security of all communities without discrimination and to uphold the rule of law and public order.

Secondly, my delegation urges the Government of Myanmar to provide unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to the affected population. While the launch of the Myanmar Government-led mechanism, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to deliver humanitarian assistance to all displaced inhabitants without discrimination, is a welcome step, we believe that their joint capacities for emergency relief are rather limited. We therefore call on the Government of Myanmar to allow unfettered and safe access to United Nations funds and programmes, including the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which can provide emergency assistance and alleviate the suffering of the victimizedpopulation.

Thirdly, we urge the Government of Myanmar to take urgent measures so that the Rohingya refugees are able to return to their homeland of Rakhine state. That should be done safely, securely and in a dignified manner, with prospects for them to enjoy decent livelihoods, as was stated by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Astana. The question of Myanmar was discussed during the first OIC Summit on Science and Technology, held on 10 September in Kazakhstan. My country endorses the OIC view on the need to ensure an inclusive and transparent citizenship verification process that leaves no individual unregistered and does not hinder access to education, health care and essential social services.

Fourthly, Kazakhstan is of the firm view that the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, headed by former United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan, are valuable. We urge the Government of Myanmar to fully implement those recommendations in a swift and timely manner so as to promote sustainable peace, stability and prosperity in Rakhine state.

We have taken note that Myanmar has already established a ministerial Implementation Committee to implement those recommendations and has held two ministerial-level meetings in the capital. We hope that the Implementation Committee in Myanmar will profoundly address the problem and make every effort to eliminate its root causes, including the loophole in the 1982 Citizenship Act, which has led to statelessness and deprivation of the rights of the Rohingya community. Unless we work towards a just and sustainable solution for the citizenship issue, there will be no durable peace in Myanmar. That was one of the important recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Kofi Annan.

Kazakhstan is of the view that inter-ethnic and interreligious strife, as well as the growing problem of refugees in the neighbouring countries of Myanmar, could serve as fertile ground for domestic and international terrorism. That could spread beyond Myanmar and become a source of threat to regional and, over time, even international peace and security. As a country that has developed a unique model of inter-ethnic and interconfessional accord, including the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan and the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Kazakhstan calls on the authorities of Myanmar to take all necessary measures to restore peace and intercommunal harmony through interfaith dialogue and a comprehensive reconciliation process. Every individual, including, those who have been unfairly discriminated against for years, should have the right to live and move without fear or persecution, irrespective of their religion or ethnicity.

We commend the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh in hosting almost half a million new Rohingya refugees and providing them with shelter, medical care, food and other forms of assistance. The timely help of United Nations agencies and donor countries is crucial for Rohingya refugees. We appeal to all States to extend the necessary support to Bangladesh in order to enable it to cope with the influx. Nevertheless, the issue is not a matter of providing more help. Ultimately, we will need to address the issue of the voluntary return of refugees to Myanmar to resolve the crisis.

Kazakhstan calls on the Myanmar authorities to cooperate more actively with the international community — including the United Nations system, OIC, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and

other international and regional organizations — in order to stabilize the situation as soon as possible.

Finally, Kazakhstan is ready to contribute positively, as part of the larger multilateral action, to resolve the crisis in Myanmar, giving all of its people hope for a better future.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his comprehensive briefing.

Japan strongly condemns the attacks carried out against the Myanmar security forces and civilians in northern areas of Rakhine state since 25 August. We express our sincere condolences to the bereaved families.

At the same time, Japan is deeply concerned by the human rights and humanitarian conditions on the ground, the allegations of the killing of civilians, and the fact that approximately 500,000 people have been displaced to Bangladesh since August, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We call for the restoration of security in a manner that is consistent with the rule of law and with full respect for human rights, while ensuring transparency throughout their efforts. We also stress the importance of continuous efforts to secure humanitarian access for all affected communities.

Against that backdrop, Japan sent Mr. Iwao Horii, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Myanmar last week and conveyed our deep concerns and position directly to the leaders of the Myanmar Government, including the military. He also visited Bangladesh yesterday and exchanged views on this issue with the people and Government of Bangladesh.

Japan commends the dedicated efforts of Bangladesh in responding to the humanitarian aspects of the current situation. Japan has been providing humanitarian assistance for displaced persons in Rakhine state and Bangladesh. Furthermore, as Foreign Minister Kono pledged last week, Japan has decided to provide up to $4 million in emergency assistance for those affected by recent incidents in Myanmar and the people who have fled to Bangladesh.

Japan was encouraged by the commitment, expressed by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi on 19 September, to the early implementation of the final recommendations by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State to achieve lasting peace and prosperity. Japan also welcomes her commitment to taking action against all people, regardless of their religion, race and political position, who go against the law of the land and violate human rights.

What is important is prompt action. We take note of the announcement of the establishment of the Implementation Committee on the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. Japan will support the efforts of the Government of Myanmar to address the human rights and humanitarian conditions on the ground.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing.

China condemns the recent violent attacks in Myanmar's Rakhine state and supports Myanmar's efforts to maintain domestic stability. We sincerely hope that order will again prevail as soon as possible so that no more harm will come to innocent civilians, and that social stability, unity among ethnic groups and economic development will be sustained.

The question of Rakhine state is rooted in a nexus of complex historical ethnic and religious factors. Many of the differences and antagonisms in the state have built up over a long time; there is no quick fix. A viable solution will be one that goes hand in hand with the peace and reconciliation process in Myanmar. China has taken note of a series of measures taken by the Government of Myanmar to ease the situation in Rakhine state and maintain its stability, which is conducive to the search for a long-term solution to the issue. It behoves the international community to view the difficulties and challenges confronting the Government of Myanmar objectively, while exercising patience and providing support and help.

China commends Bangladesh for overcoming its own difficulties to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground. We welcome the Myanmar Government's cooperation in humanitarian operations with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international bodies. The international community should encourage and support dialogue and communication between the two countries so that they can duly address the mass exodus of the Muslim population seeking refuge in Bangladesh and find a definitive solution.

China, as a friendly neighbour of both Myanmar and Bangladesh, has been actively engaging with those

countries to influence them positively and encourage them to address the issue through dialogue and consultation. China has provided and will continue to provide assistance necessary for accommodating the displaced.

As we speak, the situation on the ground is beginning to stabilize. All parties should work constructively to help reinforce that momentum, de-escalate the situation and alleviate the humanitarian conditions step by step. China stands ready to work with all parties concerned to contribute constructively to the restoration of order and the achievement of peace and stability in Rakhine state.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his briefing on the situation in Rakhine state in Myanmar. We share his concern about the serious worsening of the situation in the region, which was provoked first and foremost by fighters of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. We resolutely condemn their armed attempts to undermine efforts to stabilize the situation in Rakhine state. We are concerned about the mass exodus of Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu refugees, as well as the ensuing humanitarian crisis. We empathize with those who find themselves in such a difficult situation and those whose rights have been violated.

At the same time, the information that we are receiving indicates that the situation in Rakhine state is far from unequivocal. In recent days, evidence has been received of the involvement of fighters of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army in the massacre of civilians. Moreover, caches of improvised explosive devices have been discovered. There is evidence that the extremists have forced members of Myanmar's Hindu community in border villages to leave their homes and migrate to the territory of neighbouring Bangladesh in the same stream as Muslims. Furthermore, there is evidence of arson attacks on entire villages carried out by terrorists. Photographs confiscated from detained militants were apparently intended to contribute to reports to the leadership of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army or its foreign sponsors. Those data back up statements made earlier by the authorities of Naypyitaw that the initiators of the outbreak of violence in Rakhine state sought to maximize the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe and shift all blame for it to the Government.

We appreciate the efforts of the Myanmar authorities to resolve the situation in Rakhine state and support the dialogue with relevant United Nations agencies and human rights bodies, including the work initiated by the Naypyitaw, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in order to organize humanitarian assistance to the affected population. We note the readiness of the Myanmar authorities to repatriate refugees from the territory of Bangladesh on the basis of the procedures provided for by the bilateral agreement with that country of 1993, and to send the current lists of leaders and fighters of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army to the Bangladesh side, INTERPOL and United Nations specialized bodies. The authorities of Myanmar have invited the Bangladesh side to begin negotiations between ministers responsible for security issues and intensify contacts through the ministries of foreign affairs. We think that would prove useful.

We pay tribute to the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh, which has shown solidarity and sheltered hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar. We hope for the solid support of the international community in resolving the humanitarian crisis. These people should receive assistance. The leadership of Myanmar has begun to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Mr. Kofi Annan, and established an Implementation Committee that has already held two meetings.

I wish to stress that excessive pressure on Naypyitaw in the current situation can only aggravate the situation in and around the country. We maintain our unchanging position that there is no alternative to resolving the existing problems in Rakhine state except through political means and a dialogue between representatives of all nationalities and faiths. We call on the parties involved and external stakeholders to demonstrate restraint and objectivity in their assessment of ongoing events. We need to be very precise in using terms like "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing".

It is important to focus on practical assistance to the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh in their search for a solution to the complex and difficult problem at hand, in the spirit of equality and mutual respect. It is necessary to stop the violence and the incitement that fuels it. We must prevent further radicalization in the region, which can be used by terrorists and extremists who are already trying to establish roots in South-East

Asia. We are also concerned by how the situation might impact regional stability.

We welcome the fact that Naypyitaw is not rejecting interaction with the United Nations. The National Security Adviser to the President of Myanmar, who was in New York during the past week, invited the Secretary-General and his Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Feltman, to visit the country in order to facilitate the process of national reconciliation. It would be unreasonable to squander the opportunity to tap into the mediation efforts of the United Nations. In any case, it is necessary to seek the constructive involvement of the Government and representatives of all nationalities and faiths in resolving this long-standing complex crisis. We should not forget about the urgent task of increasing the socioeconomic development of Rakhine state.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and for his engagement in facing the alarming situation in Rakhine state.

In the past months, the number of refugees fleeing from the region has increased appallingly, which has created a dangerous humanitarian crisis with destabilizing impacts on the region. It is the responsibility of the Council to urgently address the situation and collectively engage in providing assistance. The Security Council must send a strong, unified and constructive message, in line with the priorities identified by the Secretary-General.

The crisis in northern Rakhine state is the result of a number of complex factors and requires a comprehensive response.

First, we must put an end to violence immediately. In line with requests of the European Union, we call on the authorities of Myanmar to suspend their security operations and ensure the full protection of its civilians. We condemn the coordinated attacks of 25 August by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. We stress the need for the security response to fully respect international humanitarian and human rights law. Acts of violence perpetrated against the Rohingya minority, including reports of serious abuses against women, children and the elderly, are a matter of grave concern and cannot be tolerated. National authorities are responsible for safeguarding the lives and protecting the fundamental rights of all people, without discrimination. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access must be ensured.

We join High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Filippo Grandi in his call to immediately re-establish access for United Nations agencies to Rakhine state. Humanitarian agencies and donors have mobilized rapidly. The Italian Government immediately allocated, through the High Commissioner for Refugees, €1 million to community projects for minorities and contributed €500,000 to the World Food Programme's emergency packages. Even still, needs on the ground exceed the available resources and access to those in need and those in the most dire conditions faces major restrictions.

We appreciate that the authorities of Myanmar have engaged in alleviating such suffering, but it is urgent that they step up their efforts by ensuring full international access and cooperation with the United Nations, especially with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We look forward to the visit of a group of foreign diplomats and heads of United Nations agencies to Rakhine state, which is set to take place on 2 October. We also acknowledge the steps taken by Myanmar to cooperatively address the refugee crisis with Bangladesh, and we encourage both countries to bolster that coordination. We would like to commend Bangladesh for its decision to keep its border open, as well as for its solidarity and hospitality efforts.

Secondly, the root causes of the crisis must be addressed. In its report, the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State outlines a road map for socioeconomic development and lasting reconciliation. We praise Myanmar for mandating the Commission in the first place, as well as for its commitment to following up on its recommendations with the establishment of an interministerial Implementation Commission that is in charge of implementing those recommendations. Translating the recommendations into concrete actions is now the priority, because it will pave the way for disrupting the vicious cycle of discrimination, poverty and violence that is afflicting communities.

We acknowledge the scope of the challenge and stand ready to assist, while hoping that the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Kofi Annan, will continue to be involved. The United Nations system, by integrating humanitarian aid and development assistance, is in the best position to shore up the process. We encourage Myanmar to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Organization, and we welcome its decision to participate in today's briefing.

Thirdly, the voluntary, safe and sustainable return of refugees will be key to defusing tensions and stabilizing the region. That entails ensuring registration, in line with international standards, and finding a durable solution to the problem of statelessness. Also in that regard, the United Nations can offer its expertise and assistance.

Finally, building trust among communities is paramount. We ask the Government to stifle inflammatory language and foster an interreligious dialogue. In that respect, those who are responsible for human rights violations must be held accountable. The fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council, in cooperation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, could complement Government efforts by exhaustively and impartially assessing the situation and facilitating reconciliation.

The United Nations, including the Security Council and the Secretary-General, can play a constructive role in helping Myanmar overcome the crisis and advance on its path towards an inclusive democracy. Respecting human rights is an essential prerequisite that cannot be ignored. Italy stands ready to take into consideration further constructive action by the Council and remains committed to Myanmar's democratic transition and national reconciliation.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): We thank those delegations that initiated convening this briefing for the Security Council to discuss, in a transparent manner, the current situation in Rakhine state of Myanmar. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, but most of all for his deep and personal commitment to putting an end to this tragedy. This discussion is particularly timely in light of the plight of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians who left their homes fleeing violence.

Like others on the Council, we strongly condemn the upsurge in violence in Rakhine state that has led to numerous civilian causalities and enormous suffering. Let me underscore from the very outset that any targeting of civilian populations, infringements on their human rights and other abuses are totally unacceptable. The impunity of perpetrators must not be tolerated. Steps must be taken to address the numerous reports of attacks, especially against women and girls.

As we know, there are some recent disturbing developments that were triggered by the deadly attacks committed by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army against security forces on 25 August. As the Security Council, we should also look into information about the possible involvement of external terrorist factors in inflaming violence in Rakhine. While Myanmar security forces took steps to respond to the attacks, we are particularly concerned about the mounting evidence of grave human rights violations committed over the course of the military operation in the province. We call on the authorities to show restraint, respect the rule of law and protect the civilian population.

Ukraine is seriously concerned by the continuously worsening humanitarian situation of hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons, and stresses the need to ensure unhindered access of humanitarian actors to those in need. Taking this opportunity, we express our support to the Government of Bangladesh in its efforts to provide shelter and aid to the Rohingya refugees. Considering the staggering numbers of displaced persons and refugees, the least the Government could do in the situation is to halt all military activities in Rakhine. The cycle of violence has to be stopped before it is too late. We understand that the situation in Rakhine state is an extremely complicated and sensitive issue that cannot be solved in the short run.

We note the efforts of the Government of Myanmar to address those challenges, including the establishment of the Central Committee for the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State, chaired by the State Counsellor, as well as the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Mr. Kofi Annan. We welcome the release of the final report of the Advisory Commission and the readiness of the Myanmar Government to carry out its recommendations to the full extent and within the short time frame. We are confident that the implementation of the report's recommendations could help conflict challenges in Rakhine state and achieve peace and stability in the region.

Concrete steps are urgently needed because what is doable and within reach today, may not be there tomorrow. In this Chamber, we talk a lot about prevention. Today, it is still not too late to deliver. For the Council and wider international community, it is imperative to be more proactive in ensuring that the violence stops. We strongly encourage the Government of Myanmar to seize the chance it still has and prevent the current situation from deteriorating into a full-

blown regional crisis. Nobody around the table wants to see the worse-case scenario. That means that we all have to do our duty. The Security Council is the body that is responsible for maintaining international peace and security and the Government of Myanmar is the primary entity responsible for the well-being of its own people.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We highly appreciate the participation of the Secretary-General in this meeting, and thank him for all his work with respect to the situation in Rakhine state in Myanmar and for his message conveyed to the Security Council in his letter of 2 September, which he included in his opening statement of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.3), as well as for the information he provided today.

We are very pleased that the presidency of the Security Council organized this briefing and that this organ, which is the guarantor of international peace and security, is addressing the situation in Rakhine state and of the Rohingya people in an open meeting.

Respect for the rule of law, equality before the law, the defence and promotion of human rights, dialogue and resort to peaceful means to settle disputes are some of the principles Uruguay actively defends and promotes in all of the forums in which it participates. Situations such as that which has arisen in Myanmar cannot be ignored by the Security Council.

Uruguay is deeply concerned by the escalation of tensions in Rakhine state. The serious crisis caused by the wave of sectarian violence against the Muslim Rohingya people is alarming. The exodus of people who have had to abandon their homes and flee desperately to Bangladesh is appalling. The humanitarian and security conditions and human rights situation of the Rohingya people have been very seriously affected. Violations of human rights related to the conflict in various parts of Myanmar, especially in Rakhine state, are not new. Many such violations have been documented in reports of the Secretary-General.

The resurgence of violence in the country clearly shows that significant, pressing challenges remain. Democratic reform and genuine change in Myanmar can take place only if human rights are respected and a true national reconciliation takes place. It is therefore important for the Myanmar Government to step up its efforts to stop the violations and adopt all the measures necessary to ensure accountability and put an end to impunity.

All complaints of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law must be investigated in an exhaustive, transparent and independent manner. In that regard, Uruguay welcomes the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 34/22 in March, when massive persecutions had already begun. The resolution mandates the establishment of a fact-finding mission and requests that the Government of Myanmar provide all guarantees necessary to the mission's ability to successfully conduct its activities. It also urges the authorities to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The only way to overcome the crisis is by approaching it from a human-rights perspective.

While we acknowledge that the situation in Rakhine state is a complex intercommunal issue with deep historical roots, as we have said on a number of official statements recentiy, we are also aware of the military activities of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army against the Myanmar security forces, which we naturally condemn. But the responsibility for protecting civilians always falls primarily on States. Nothing exempts the Government of Myanmar from shouldering its responsibility to provide the necessary security and assistance to the Rohingya people and to allow the United Nations and partners to offer humanitarian aid.

The authorities of Myanmar must put an end to the military operations and allow unrestricted humanitarian access. They must also pay due attention to the Rohingya people, whose status has remained unresolved for far too long. The question arises as to whether a Government can feel proud of being home to the largest population of stateless people in the world. Protection of the civil population must always be a priority, and the applicable norms of international human rights law and international humanitarian law must be respected.

Uruguay is committed to preventing atrocious crimes and urgently calls for the Government of Myanmar to stop the violence, suspend military operations, allow the return of those who have had to flee, and facilitate safe and unfettered access to humanitarian aid. Two hypotheses arise ftrom this tragic crisis if we focus, as we should, on prevention.

First, the excessive and disproportionate repression of the Rohingya minority under the pretext of combating a terrorist group will have the least-desired effect. It will sow the seeds of despair, hatred and extremism. Secondly, and perhaps worse, it will run the risk of allowing other global terrorist groups, such as Da'esh or Al-Qaida, to infiltrate Myanmar territory and start operating there, destabilizing the country and in the region.

Uruguay congratulates and thanks Bangladesh for its generosity of recent weeks by providing hundreds of thousands of refugees — an estimated 70 per cent of whom are children — with security, food and shelter. We also thank the agencies and institutions that are working intensively to provide humanitarian assistance, and call on the international community and neighbouring countries to provide the support and resources necessary to address this sensitive situation.

I conclude with a remark made several years ago by Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

> "A country that is not at peace with itself, that fails to acknowledge and protect the dignity and worth of all its people, is not a free country."

Mr. Zambrana (Bolivia (Plurinational State of)) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing today on Rakhine state of Myanmar, and we applaud the measures he has taken personally to date.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia vigorously condemns the violence impacting Rakhine state, especially the Rohingya Muslim ethnic group. Based on information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and as noted by the Secretary-General, between 25 August and 20 September the events led to the escalation of violence caused some half a million people to cross the border and seek refuge in Bangladesh, with hundreds of thousands more internally displaced.

We condemn all actions that aggravate intercommunitary tension and incite violence, belicose rhetoric, racial and religious hatred and any act of sexual abuse or exploitation. All such acts must be duly investigated and those responsible brought to justice and prosecuted by the corresponding courts.

Having condemned the acts of violence, discrimination and suffering that victimize not just the Rohingya people but also other ethnic minority groups such as the Daing-net, the Mro, the Thet, the Mramagyi and Hindus, Bolivia once again reaffirms that any conflict within a State must be resolved first and foremost within its borders, respecting the principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. If it cannot be so resolved, it should be supported by regional and subregional organizations, while upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law, international law and human rights law.

We believe that it is also important to respect the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the non-use or threat of use of force to settle conflicts, in accordance with the principle of a peaceful settlement of conflicts. In this regard, we believe that it is important to encourage and support Myanmar in its quest for a peaceful solution to this humanitarian situation through efforts on a number of levels that include dialogue, consultations, mediation, good offices, negotiations and crisis administration.

In this context, we highlight the welcome and ready cooperation extended to refugees from Rakhine state by the Government and the people of Bangladesh. We encourage them to continue working with the various United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross to lessen the humanitarian impact on the region.

We call on the Government of Myanmar to engage in a fruitful dialogue within and outside of its borders. The participation of its neighbours, regional organizations and the international community will allow it to reach agreements to stabilize the Rakhine state and to honour its obligation to protect all its civilians, regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation. In the context of diplomacy, and with a view to the peace and stability of the region, we call on them to work to draft an agreement that contains a concrete plan for the repatriation and safe, voluntary and dignified return of the refugees in Bangladesh to Rakhine state.

We take note of the estabalishment in Myanmar of the ministerial Implementation Committee on the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, headed by Kofi Annan, which provide a clear road map for a peaceful solution to this situation, and which we encourage them to fulfil. Similarly, Bolivia encourages the Government of Myanmar to allow humanitarian access so that assistance can be provided to the victims of these tragic events.

In this context, we welcome the good offices of the Secretary-General and call on the Government of Myanmar to take his recommendations into account, especially with regard to the urgent suspension of all military action, an end to the violence, respect for the rule of law, and the recognition of the right to return of all those who had to abandon the country. This will guarantee the provision of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and others, and the development of an effective plan of action to address the root causes of the crisis, which include providing nationality to the Muslims of Rakhine state or, at least for now, a legal status that would enable them to lead normal lives, including freedom of movement and access to job markets, education and health-care services.

We believe that it is inconceivable today to deny a person the right to nationality, which carries prerogatives that allow all human beings to fully enjoy the benefits of a State.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ethiopia.

I would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for being here with us this afternoon and for his important briefing on the security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar, which is indeed deeply worrying. We appreciate the initiative he has taken to draw the attention of the Council to the latest developments in Myanmar, which no doubt could easily have serious implications for regional peace and security if not handled both quickly and carefully.

We also look forward to listening to the views of Bangladesh and Myanmar, the two countries that are directly concerned with the discussion we are having today. We certainly recognize, as the representatives of Sweden and Italy said earlier, the complex nature of the challenges in Rakhine State, which we believe can be addressed only through a comprehensive approach that combines political, development, security and humanitarian concerns. In this regard, we encourage the Government of Myanmar to address the root causes of the violence. We wish to underline the need to address all forms of hate speech that incite and fuel violence, and stress the need to take the measures necessary to defuse intercommunal tensions and protect the rights of all communities. Of course, any acts of extreme violence are unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation. That is why we see the initial attack by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army as very unfortunate and senseless. The Secretary-General is right in condemning it. We believe that has only worsened the humanitarian tragedy, not helped to ease it. The way this tragedy is approached from the outset will determine how soon those affected will get sustainable relief through addressing the root causes or how much the situation will be further complicated, with the humanitarian situation getting ever worse, with no end in sight to the human suffering.

Already the Government of Bangladesh is telling us that the situation has become grave, with far-reaching implications for regional peace and security. We welcome and support the proposal by the Secretary-General to address the tragic situation as a matter of high priority. There is indeed an urgent need to end the military operation. The cooperation of the Myanmar Government in allowing unhindered humanitarian access is critical to reach those in need of urgent assistance.

The efforts made by the Bangladesh Government and the United Nations agencies to cope with the influx of refugees is to be commended. Here we wish to stress one very critical matter: the need to do what we must to ensure an acceptable level of mutual trust between the Myanmar Government, the United Nations and the international community at large. The role of diplomacy should never be overlooked, including an even greater role by the Secretary-General. We believe that the implementation of the recommendations made by the Advisory Commission will contribute to tackling the long-standing obstacles to peace and development in Rakhine state.

In this regard, we commend the initial step taken by the Government of Myanmar to establish a ministerial committee to ensure the effective implementation of the Commission's recommendations. It is absolutely necessary, we stress, to work closely with the Myanmar Government in addressing the root causes of the conflict in Rakhine state. Cooperation with Bangladesh and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is also vital in addressing the issue of refugees and its broader implications for regional peace and stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tun.

Mr. Tun: I thank you for this opportunity to address the Security Council with regard to the violence

and turmoil that have recently engulfed Myanmar's Rakhine state and the ensuing humanitarian situation. I have listened carefully to the statements made by the Secretary-General and the representatives of the States members of the Council.

The common thread that runs through the commentaries is that "something is rotten in the state of Rakhine". Assertions in the media that a campaign of terror has been unleashed in northern Rakhine and that unspeakable crimes have been committed against innocent people have only served to heighten the concern of the international community. While such assertions might appear reasonable at first glance to a lay observer, expert observers with knowledge of the history of Rakhine and of Myanmar and exposure to the propaganda tactics of terrorists will see such comments for what they really are: subjective and emotionally charged accounts. Nevertheless, we understand the concern of the international community and take serious note of it.

I would like to take this opportunity to apprise the Council of the situation obtaining on the ground and of our efforts to end the violence, assist all innocent civilians affected by the turmoil and plans to find a lasting solution to the daunting challenges we face.

First, we recognize that there is a serious situation that needs to be addressed. But we also need to recognize that the recent round of violence was triggered by the attacks launched by the so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) terrorists.

We feel deeply the suffering and plight of all affected communities — Rakhine, Muslim, Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and Hindu. They are all victims of violence and terrorism.

Terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. It has no place in our civilized world. I am sure that members will agree with me when I say that we cannot condone terrorism in any form or manifestation. The Government of Myanmar has strongly condemned the acts of terror committed by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army in northern Rakhine. The highest Islamic organization in Myanmar, the All Myanmar Islamic Religious Organization, as well as the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar, have expressed their solidarity with the Government and issued statements condemning the acts of terror committed by ARSA. They stressed that no religion can condone violence that results in the loss of life or property. They expressed their support for the Government's efforts to address the situation in Rakhine and its endeavours to promote national reconciliation and peace in the entire country.

In this regard, we welcome the statement by the Secretary-General and many other representatives around this table condemning the acts of terrorism. The Government will work to ensure that the fight against terrorism does not distract us from our commitment to bringing peace, harmony and development to Rakhine state. It is striving to restore normalcy. There have been no armed clashes or clearance operations since 5 September.

Secondly, I wish to stress the fact that there is no ethnic cleansing or genocide in Myanmar. Ethnic cleansing and genocide are serious charges that should not be made lightly. It would be a sad commentary on our times if we allowed emotions to cloud our view and asserted that what is happening in Rakhine was ethnic cleansing without first undertaking a legal review and making a judicial determination. I can assure the Council that the leaders of Myanmar, who have been struggling so long for freedom and human rights, will never espouse a policy of genocide or ethnic cleansing and that the Government will do everything it can to prevent it.

As clearly stated by the State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, in her address to the diplomatic corps in Naypyitaw on 19 September, we condemn all human rights violations and violence. We are committed to the restoration of peace, stability and the rule of law throughout the country. The security forces have been instructed to adhere strictly to the code of conduct in carrying out security operations, to exercise all due restraint and to take full measures to avoid collateral damage and the harming of innocent civilians.

Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. It is home to 135 officially recognized ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture and adherence to a variety of religions, including Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. Religious groups have been living in harmony throughout our history. The situation that we face today is due to terrorism and is not based on religion. It should be noted that Muslims are not a minority in northern Rakhine. They constitute 95 per cent of the total population there. What is little known is that the vast majority of Muslims did not abandon their hearth and home. While

there has been an exodus, more than 50 per cent of the Muslim villages in northern Rakhine remain intact and are living in peace with their neighbours, whether they be Hindus or Buddhists.

Representatives of the diplomatic corps in Yangon, accompanied by the media, will visit northern Rakhine on Monday. They will have the opportunity to witness first-hand the situation on the ground. I am happy to note that the Government of Myanmar has extended an invitation to the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General to visit Myanmar. We hope to welcome them in the near future to enhance cooperation between Myanmar and the United Nations.

Thirdly, the Government of Myanmar is fully aware of its primary responsibility to address the humanitarian situation. We have been providing assistance to all displaced persons without discrimination. We are collaborating with the The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and donor countries, all represented in this room, to provide assistance expeditiously in accordance with humanitarian principles. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management has agreed to work with us to deliver humanitarian assistance to all displaced persons.

Fourthly, we are concerned by reports that thousands of people have crossed into Bangladesh. We would like to understand the real reasons for the exodus. We will talk to those who have fled, as well as to those who have opted to remain in their villages. The vast majority of those who fled did so out of fear. Fear was instilled in their hearts by the terrorists. Some hundreds of Muslim villagers recently left their homes and headed towards the border, notwithstanding the efforts of the regional authorities to persuade them to return to their villages. The villagers voiced their concerns regarding the availability of humanitarian assistance in a sustained manner, as well as fears that they are becoming a minority in their own area.

We have learned that the villagers have been threatened over the telephone and that they have been persuaded by their fellow men who are already in Bangladesh to join them. Moreover, the villagers remain fearful of retaliation by the ARSA, following the revelation that a large number of Hindu villagers have been massacred and buried in mass graves. The authorities have reassured the villagers that they would be provided assistance and security. However, some have chosen to cross over to Bangladesh.

There has been a growing clamour for the repatriation of refugees who have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh. I would like to stress here that Myanmar is prepared to start the verification process at any time. Bangladesh and Myanmar are neighbours, and our two neighbours already went through a repatriation process in 1993.

We are working to enhance relations with Bangladesh. I have met with the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh here in New York last week, and the Minister of the Office of the State Counsellor will visit Dhaka this weekend to further discuss matters of mutual concern and to find ways and means to move ahead with regard to the situation on our border. We have also invited the Minister of Home Affairs of Bangladesh. We will welcome him any time that he is able to come to Myanmar and hope to take forward our cooperation on border security matters. Our stated willingness to discuss the issue of repatriation discredits the assertion that there is a policy of ethnic cleansing on our part.

The new Government in Myanmar inherited a challenging situation in Rakhine state and has had to deal with the consequences of actions by other actors. The current crisis is due to the acts of terrorism perpetrated by ARSA. To address the situation, the Government launched a number of initiatives including the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Mr. Kofi Annan The recommendations of the Commission represent a viable road map forward, and we have embraced them. An Implementation Committee for the recommendations has already been formed and work is in progress. Two meetings have already been held. We must give this Committee time and space to go forward.

At this critical juncture in the life of our young democracy, it is imperative that the international community join hands with us to ensure that democracy takes firm root and that we will succeed in carrying out our responsibility to establish peace, stability, and development in Rakhine and in the whole of Myanmar. That is the only way that we can solve the conundrum in Rakhine. The Security Council must refrain from taking measures that exacerbate rather than alleviate the situation there. It can and must do no less.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and giving us the opportunity to speak. We commend the Secretary-General for his unremitting attention to the issue.

According to the United Nations, since 25 August nearly half a million people have entered Bangladesh, fleeing violence in northern Rakhine state. Despite serious constrains, Bangladesh has given shelter to these distressed Rohingyas, a majority of whom are women and children. Our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has personally stood by the side of this most persecuted minority in the world.

We are providing these forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals with basic and emergency humanitarian assistance. The international community has come forward in the spirit of responsibility sharing, although the United Nations and other relevant partners are stretched beyond their capacity. Our authorities are also conducting biometric registrations of all those who arrived in the past month. With this fresh influx, Bangladesh is currently hosting over 900,000 forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar. This is an untenable situation, to say the least.

Despite claims to the contrary, violence has not ceased in northern Rakhine state, nor has the exodus of Rohingyas to Bangladesh. Last night alone, an additional 20,000 entered Bangladesh. Any individual among the new arrivals would make it known why this exodus is continuing. They all speak of the use of rape as a weapon to scare families to leave. Available reports suggest that village upon village have been burnt, homes have been looted and people have been abused in Rakhine state. Those atrocities attest to the fact that the Myanmar Government is using arson to depopulate northern Rakhine and take ownership of the land.

The indiscriminate killing and torture by the Myanmar security forces, aided by vigilante groups acting on the basis of religious and ethnic affiliation, have already been cited as a textbook example of ethnic cleansing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. That was also emphasized by our Prime Minister in her statement before the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.14). The Security Council perhaps has a responsibility to examine whether military operations and consequent developments in northern Rakhine state point to any threat to peace or breach of the peace, and what can be done to restore peace.

In the present circumstances, it is of utmost importance that the remaining Rohingya civilians in northern Rakhine State be guaranteed unconditional protection by creating United Nations-administered safe zones inside Myanmar. We must ensure that the humanitarian assistance provided reaches all affected communities, in particular the Rohingyas. Myanmar must ensure full and unfettered humanitarian access to the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies.

In line with our zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and violent extremism, we have unequivocally condemned the alleged attacks on the Myanmar security forces by extremist elements and offered to help Myanmar to combat terrorism through coordinated patrols, joint inspections and even joint operations. Regrettably, against the backdrop of our overtures, we have heard senior Myanmar leaders and officials of state entities referring to the alleged extremists as "Bengali terrorists". There is perhaps no taker for the baseless and malicious propaganda that projects the Rohingyas as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. This is not only a blatant denial of the ethnic identity of the Rohingyas, but also an affront to Bengalis all over the world. It has to stop.

Myanmar claims that half of the Muslim villages are vacant, despite the presence of about 30,000 military and other forces. Myanmar's official narrative also claims that a particular terrorist group has gathered such strength and capacity that it has been able it to enlist most male members of the Rohingya community in northern Rakhine state and use civilians and children as combatants and human shields. This state of volatility constitutes a larger threat to regional peace and security and, as such, should be a major security concern for the international community, including the Council.

Likewise, the new narratives of Muslims killing Muslims or Muslims killing Hindus should be perceived as the State's failure or abnegation of its primary responsibility to protect its civilians. Allegations and counter-allegations of various forms of atrocities, which amount to crimes against humanity, must be fully investigated by a Security Council-mandated fact-finding mission.

The Council should also take into account that Myanmar has reportedly deployed more than two divisions of armed forces in areas near our border since the first week of August. Troops have been spotted

within 200 metres of the zero line, and heavy armaments and artillery are reportedly placed in close proximity to our border. There have been 19 reported incidents of Bangladesh's air space being violated by Myanmar helicopters and drones, including the latest one the day before yesterday. Anti-personnel mines have reportedly been laid along one stretch of the border to prevent the return of Rohingyas to Myanmar. Incidents of firing on Bangladeshi fishermen have resulted in the death one earlier this week.

Bangladesh continues to exercise utmost restraint in the face of such repeated, unwarranted and wilful provocations. As a responsible and responsive State, we shall forge ahead in seeking a peaceful and lasting solution to this protracted situation through diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation. Accordingly, our Prime Minister made a five-point proposal last week before the General Assembly that has been largely echoed by the Secretary-General and Council members this afternoon. Pursuant to those points, the immediate priorities should be to cease all forms of violence and ensure protection and humanitarian assistance for those affected or vulnerable in Rakhine state.

At the same time, Bangladesh looks forward to immediately start working with Myanmar and the international community to help implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and ensure the safe, voluntary and sustainable return of all those displaced from Myanmar into our territory over the years, including the recent arrivals.

In this regard, previous precedents, including the 1992 arrangement, can be used by adapting them to current realities, challenges and priorities. In that regard, Bangladesh prefers joint verification in the presence of international observers. The forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals should return to their places of original abode in safety, security and dignity. As our Prime Minister stated in the General Assembly, "The crisis has its root in Myanmar and its solution has to be found in Myanmar" (*A/72/PV.14*). Bangladesh, however, remains committed to engaging with Myanmar and the international community for a resolution of this outstanding critical issue.

Our experience from the past three decades makes it obvious that the bilateral track loses its momentum as soon as the international community shifts its attention elsewhere. We therefore urge the Council to keep this issue at the forefront of its agenda and make sure that we manage to arrive to the point of its logical conclusion. We also invite Council members to conduct a field mission to Bangladesh, and possibly to Myanmar, to gather first-hand accounts of the unfolding humanitarian crisis.

Before concluding, I must, on behalf of the Government and the people of Bangladesh, express our deepest appreciation for the show of support extended to us by each member of the Council this afternoon.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

As this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of September, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of Ethiopia to Council members, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives and their respective staff, and to the secretariat of the Council for all the support they have given to us.

Indeed, it has been a busy month, in which we have rallied to a consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone or without the hard work, support and positive contribution of every delegation, the representatives of the secretariat and all relevant conference service officers, interpreters and translators.

As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of France good luck in the month of October.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8061

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8061st meeting
Thursday, 5 October 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2312 (2016) (S/2017/761)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-31075 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): As this is the first public meeting of the Security Council for the month of October, I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Security Council, to pay tribute to His Excellency Ambassador Tekeda Alemu, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, for his service as President of the Council for the month of September. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Alemu and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2312 (2016) (S/2017/761)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the following countries to participate in this meeting: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/827, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/761, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2312 (2016).

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2380 (2017).

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8062

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8062nd meeting
Thursday, 5 October 2017, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2017/811)

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17-31061 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2017/811)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, who is joining this meeting via video-teleconference from Bamako.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, to participate in this meeting. Mr. Annadif is also joining this meeting via video-teleconference from Bamako.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/811, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Annadif.

Mr. Annadif (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to interact with the Security Council this afternoon from Bamako. I thank the Secretary-General for this opportunity to introduce his report (S/2017/811) and to take stock of recent developments in the situation in Mali, including the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which emanated from the Algiers process.

I am delighted to welcome among us His Excellency Mr Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

The report before us covers the period from mid-June to mid-September 2017. This period was characterized by the following major developments in the political and security areas: a debate on the draft revision of the Constitution, and armed clashes between the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA), which are the two signatories to the Agreement. These two events almost called into question the entire process of the implementation of the Agreement. The combined efforts of the main Malian actors, including the leaders of the signatory movements, in addition to those of the international community, made it possible to resolve the two crises, which are the main reason for the ongoing delays in the implementation of the Agreement.

With respect to the debate on the draft constitutional revision, the decision of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to postpone the referendum has eased social tensions and put an end to the protests. As for the clashes between the CMA and the Platform, after signing renewable truces on 23 August and 6 September, the two coalitions were able on 20 September to sign a text they are calling a commitment, enshrining a total and final cessation of hostilities. The implementation of the provisions of this undertaking continues apace. In witness to that, this morning the CMA freed nine Platform prisoners in Kidal.

It was in this atmosphere of successful outcomes that the Government of Mali and the United Nations convened a high-level meeting on the implementation of the Agreement on 20 September in New York. The high-level meeting, co-chaired by the President of Mali and the Secretary-General, was attended, for the first time, by CMA and Platform officials. The many high-ranking participants stressed the need to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement, including the creation of a second chamber of Parliament and the operationalization of regional associations; the launching of the cantonment and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes; the drafting of a security sector reform road map; and the gradual redeployment of the reconstituted Malian defence and security forces.

The Governor of Kidal took office on 19 September, symbolizing the return of the State. In that regard, I would stress that this new impetus must be capitalized on to ensure that the return of the Governmor to Kidal will be more than merely symbolic.

Despite these positive developments, we must keep in mind that the 2018 deadlines are fast approaching and that the challenges ahead are enormous. All parties will have to redouble their efforts to restore trust between them and, despite the aforementioned delays in the implementation of the Agreement, commit to the necessary reforms and provide the peace dividends so long awaited by the people of Mali.

I recall that the human rights situation remains a matter of concern owing, inter alia, to the volatile security environment in the country. The rise of violent extremism perpetrated by armed elements, which has impeded the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms in the central regions in particular, has become very worrisome. The absence of State authorities in certain areas and the conduct of anti-terrorist operations in which human rights violations have been reported are the main causes contributing to the resurgence of these phenomena.

With respect to the fight against impunity, it is worth noting the progress made by the Government, in particular in the handling of cases stemming from the 2012 crisis. The start of the trial of Aliou Mahamane Touré and the verdict sentencing him to 10 years of incarceration has aroused a glimmer of hope for the many victims of abuse and serious violations of human rights committed since the beginning of the crisis. In this regard, I would stress that what is being sought is that all perpetrators of such violations and abuses be held accountable for their actions, whatever the context or circumstances of their occurrence. The ultimate objective of the support the United Nations is giving the Government of Mali is to fight impunity, ensure access to justice for all and preserve the rule of law and democracy. Further, intensified redeployment of security and judicial authorities and the strengthening of transitional justice mechanisms to prevent impunity from promoting a culture of do-it-yourself pseudo-justice is essential.

In addition, the Security Council sanctions regime that was recently set up under resolution 2374 (2017) rightly represents an important turning point in the fight against impunity and in guaranteeing respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict. The sanctions regime is an important lever against those who would pose obstacles to the smooth unfolding of the peace process. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) will continue to provide assistance to State institutions, with which it maintains a regular dialogue. The dialogue aims, inter alia, at promoting exchanges about cases of human rights violations and abuses that have been documented throughout the country in order to allow appropriate legal action to be taken in accordance with international human rights obligations. The forthcoming establishment of the international commission of inquiry will work in this direction.

As for MINUSMA, it continues to face significant challenges resulting from the activities of extremist groups and other terrorists that have formed criminal networks. These are the main obstacles to a return to peace, in particular because the groups are enemies of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The almost daily loss of United Nations peacekeepers, caused by improvised explosive devices or land mines, particularly on the main supply lines of the Mission, has become unbearable and unsustainable. The death of three peacekeepers and the wounding of four others and a Malian civilian contractor who has since died, in Gao on 24 September, is a small but perfect illustration of this fact. Unfortunately, many questions remain unanswered, including the identity of the perpetrators. That is why we are urging the Government and the signatory groups to accelerate their implementation of the Agreement and their efforts aimed at reconciliation, so that, first of all, we can figure out who is who and pool our capacities in order to address the situation together.

With regard to the fight against improvised explosive devices, we intend to undertake several actions in the coming days, but a global approach is required, starting with a strategic vision, including finding backers and technicians, who mostly come from abroad, as they are not Malians, as well as attracting associated financial mechanisms. It is also high time for the escort battalion convoy and the regional quick reaction force to be fully deployed to give the Mission the freedom of action it needs.

In the light of all the threats faced by MINUSMA and the entire United Nations family in Mali, we reiterate the funding needs, which are growing — we will not hide that fact — given the need for investment to protect against indirect attacks and improve surveillance, detection and early-warning and alarm systems. These are some of the protective measures designed to mitigate the loss of life resulting from indirect attacks on the MINUSMA camps, even

though, for some time now, outside patrols have limited these indirect attacks. Technological upgrades are also welcome.

The establishment of the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) provides us with an opportunity that could contribute to creating a climate conducive to the proper execution of MINUSMA's mandate. It is important to note that a holistic approach that goes beyond the use of military force and ensures coherence with the peace process, development initiatives and the African Union peace and security architecture is necessary. At the request of the Secretary-General, an exploratory mission comprising representatives of MINUSMA, all headquarter departments and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel visited the capitals of the G-5 Sahel countries and the Force Headquarters based in Sévaré in early September. This mission noted the countries of the region's commitment to operationalizing the Force conjointe.

We welcome the ongoing exchanges between the G-5 Sahel countries and their partners, including at the high-level event in New York organized by Mali in the context of the General Assembly and at the Berlin meeting held on 19 September. In this regard, we reiterate the Secretary-General's call for substantial and sustained international support for the G-5 Sahel initiative. The events that took place yesterday at Mali's border with Niger are a cause for concern.

Pursuant to resolution 2364 (2017), consultations are under way to determine which responsibilities may be transferred to the United Nations country team. It should be noted, however, that this transfer of responsibility will take place only gradually and in the medium and long terms, because the challenges are enormous. I need only cite problems of access and resources, among others. These are factors that contribute to the increase in humanitarian needs.

In that regard, and as Council members know, in 2017 humanitarian actors launched a $305 million appeal to meet needs in the areas of health care, water, nutrition, food security, protection, education and shelter. However, as Council members also know, the humanitarian response plan was funded only at just over 35 per cent, which still allowed the Government and its partners to assist thousands of Malian citizens in the north who have been affected by the conflict. With respect to the Peacebuilding Fund, it is worth noting that Mali has received nearly $17 million, which has been used to finance some 11 projects, and through funding for the region we have received $3 million for a programme linking Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Annadif for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to congratulate and commend Ethiopia for the effective manner in which it conducted the work of the Security Council the month of September, and to wish you, Sir, and your delegation success in leading the Council this month.

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mahamat Saleh Annadif for his briefing today.

To begin, I would like I would like to reflect on the juncture at which Mali is today, with a security situation that has seriously deteriorated; a precarious humanitarian situation resulting primarily from insecurity; an Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali that has been in effect for more than two years, but continues to await implementation; a newly established Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017); a peacekeeping operation on the ground enjoying the most robust and lethal mandate of its kind; and a joint multinational force to counter terrorism that is supposed to begin operations in the near future. Uruguay welcomes the establishment of a joint force by the Group of Five for the Sahel, and encourages such subregional initiatives to address the challenges accompanied by national ownership. Nevertheless, the civilian population in Mali continues to fall prey to the actions of terrorist groups, the repeated clashes among armed groups and the absence of State authority primarily in the northern half of the country.

We regret that the situation in the Republic of Mali continues to deteriorate, largely owing to the actions of terrorist and extremist groups, which are enemies of the peace and reconciliation process, but also of additional and deep concern are the violations of the provisions of the Agreement by the signatory groups themselves. Uruguay reiterates and emphasizes that the primary responsibility for public order and the protection of civilians in the Republic of Mali lies with its authorities.

The international community, in particular the United Nations, is assisting the Government in its efforts to shoulder the responsibilities that intrinsically befall it as a sovereign country. The international community indeed has been supporting Mali in its efforts to achieve peace in the country in a number of ways, including by making financial contributions for the development of projects in the north of the country; establishing and strengthening the mandate of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); and carrying out peacebuilding projects under the aegis of the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as visits by the Secretary-General and missions of the Security Council.

We believe that it is necessary and urgent to adopt a multidimensional approach to address the root causes fuelling the conflict in Mali. Areas such as social development, providing basic services to the population, access to justice and creating jobs should be among the priorities, along with initiatives pertaining to security, if we want to achieve long-term stability.

We note with concern the repeated allegations of human rights violations committed by armed groups and security forces in the country. In that regard, Uruguay calls for all security activities, including those deployed to counter terrorism, to be carried out in strict compliance with the norms of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as to ensure that all due process guarantees be accorded to the alleged victims of those violations. Those responsible for committing those violations must be held accountable.

We welcome the establishment of the sanctions regime pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), in response to the request of the Government of Mali. We must not lose sight of the fact that the imposition of those sanctions constitutes an additional tool for the Council to achieve sustainable peace in Mali, but at the same time we must continue to use the other tools at our disposal, including operations deployed on the ground, mediation and good offices, among others, while always keeping within the framework of Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation as the cornerstone of the political process. But what is most important is continuing dialogue and the commitment to the agreements by all the signatories.

Lastly, we would like to express our support and appreciation to MINUSMA and the troop-contributing countries that are doing commendable work in an adverse environment and with limited capacities, but — beyond any doubt — with outstanding courage, goodwill and devotion to carrying out their mandate.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to underscore its appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia and his team for their outstanding presidency of the Security Council last month, and joins the representative of Uruguay in wishing the French presidency every success for this month.

Bolivia appreciates the briefing given by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mahamat Saleh Annadif, and welcomes the presence of Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, We thank France for having convened and organized this briefing.

Bolivia regrets and condemns the attacks perpetrated by armed groups against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in the Gao region on 24 September. We convey our condolences to the families of those attacked and to the Government and the people of Bangladesh for the loss of three members of the peacekeeping force. We also express our appreciation to the personnel of MINUSMA who have stepped up their work so as to complete the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, while facilitating political dialogue through mediation, good offices and cooperation with the Malian Government. Similarly, we acknowledge the work of the Government and the President of the Republic of Mali, aimed at bringing about a definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities by initiating the national plans and taking national political measure that are fundamental to achieving peace and stability in Mali.

In that regard, it is important that to analyse the root causes of the crisis, including the consequences of intervention and the regime change policies carried out in Libya in 2011, leading to destabilization and the ensuing chaos and terrorism that fuelled national conflicts in the Sahel and Libya.

We express our concern about the lack of material, technological, logistical and intelligence capacities suffered by MINUSMA, which impedes it from effectively being able to effectively and efficiently carry out its mandate in a very volatile environment

encompassing asymmetrical attacks that jeopardize the political process, the safety of the members of the Mission and the civilian population.

According to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/811), during the reporting period from June to September, 44 attacks were carried out by terrorist and extremist armed groups, of which 21 were against MINUSMA, 10 targeted French forces, and 13 targeted the Malian defence and security forces. Those statistics represent an increase of 102 per cent in the number of attacks. Moreover, owing to those asymmetrical attacks, the protection of civilians has deteriorated. Armed groups continue to carry out violent acts in the Ménaka, Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu and, especially, Kidal regions where we have also seen a breakdown in relations among the Coordination des movements de l'Azawad, the Tuareg and the Platform coalition of armed groups.

The humanitarian situation is also a source of concern largely because of the clashes among non-State armed groups engaged in activities of serious concern, including forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, the recruitment of children and sexual abuse and violence. Their actions and hold over large swathes of the territory have led to the increase of internally displaced persons and refugees, who to date number more than 3,000. More than 140,000 Malians have sought refuge across the border in neighbouring countries. Bolivia calls on all armed groups to lay down their weapons, join the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and abide by all the provisions of the 2015 Agreement.

In conclusion, we urge the international community to continue its unwavering efforts to bring about peace and stability Mali once and for all. We believe that supporting the Maii Government is key to achieving lasting peace, while firmly respecting the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

We also welcome the initiative of the French presidency to organize a visit to the region, which will allow us to gain first-hand understanding of the situation in the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of Mali.

Mr. Diop (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I am very happy to see you, Mr. President, presiding over the Security Council this month. I wish you and the entire French delegation every success in as you guide the work of the Council and assure you of the full cooperation of Mali in those endeavours.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the outstanding work of our brother Ambassador Tekeda Alemu and the Ethiopian delegation during their presidency of the Council last month.

I particularly welcome the forthcoming visit of the members of the Security Council to three countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). We will be very happy to welcome Council members to Bamako on 19 October.

I also take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the people and the Government of Mali to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and all the women and men of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), under the leadership of our brother Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for their ongoing commitment and sacrifice alongside the people of Mali in their quest for peace, stability and development.

On behalf of the Government of Mali, I take note of the report (S/2017/811) of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali from June to September, and thank the Special Representative for his briefing, which brings me to make the following observations.

At the outset, I should like to welcome the clarifications made by the Special Representative on the period covered by the report, in which the Secretary-General states that "almost no progress was made in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali" (*S/2017/811, para. 77*). I thank the Special Representative for his efforts in that regard. Indeed, the Government of Mali was astonished at that assertion, which at first glance gives the impression of widespread inertia regarding the implementation of the Agreement, despite the efforts of the Government of Mali and the international community.

The Government of Mali recognizes the difficulties that have plagued the peace process, but it considers that remarkable progress has been made in the implementation of the Agreement, a product of the Algiers process. Today, that is evidenced in the recognition by all the secular and republican signatory armed groups of the State of Mali and, above all, the fact that national unity is contested by no signatory

to the Agreement. It is also evidenced in the effective cessation of hostilities between the armed groups and the Malian defence and security forces, which continues to this day.

To that end, I welcome and recall the conclusions of the high-level meeting on the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, held in New York on 20 September. At the end of the meeting, the participants

> "took note of the substantial progress made in its implementation since the Ministerial Meeting of 23 September 2016. They noted, among others, the holding of the Conference for national understanding, the establishment of the National Integration and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commissions and the National Council for Security Sector Reform as well as the efforts underway to pursue institutional reforms, notably the establishment of the second chamber of parliament in line with the provisions of the Peace Agreement and on an inclusive basis. Also, noting that the implementation of the Peace Agreement had entered in its third year, participants stressed the need for additional progress in the coming months".

The Secretary-General has expressed satisfaction in his previous reports and hailed the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement and the commitment of the Government of Mali, led by President of the Republic His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, to pursuing his efforts. Such satisfaction makes it clear that the peace process is well under way, despite the difficulties.

Despite all the challenges, I can assure the Council that the Government of Mali remains committed to expediting the implementation of the Agreement, because we are convinced that there is no credible alternative to that peaceful solution to the crisis, in particular in light of the agreement that was concluded today among all Malian actors. I understand the impatience of the Secretary-General, the members of the Council and our other partners with the delays in implementing the Agreement. I know that the Council also understands the complex challenges facing our peace process, many of which are out of the hands of the Government of Mali.

At the domestic level, the lack of trust and persistent tensions between the two signatory movements constitute a major concern for the Government. The deadly clashes between the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups last July in the Kidal region are a perfect example of that. Faced with a situation that jeopardizes the peace process, the Government has turned to its own national crisis-settlement mechanisms. Thus, the efforts of the religious and traditional leaders of Mali, together with those of the High Representative of the President of the Republic of Mali for the Implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement, have restored calm and enabled the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the two armed groups. Those efforts also allowed for the return of the Governor of Kidal. In that regard, I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali and his team.

Those positive dynamics need to be reinforced. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2374 (2017), through which the Security Council instituted a sanctions regime against the spoilers of the peace process in Mali, at the request of the Malian Government. Yes, we asked for sanctions, but we asked for sanctions that would be fair, transparent and equitable, to be used as an additional means to pressure the Malian parties to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement, with a view to achieving the legitimate lasting peace that our people await.

However, I would like to point out that the delays in the implementation of the Agreement are also and above all attributable to the deterioration of the security situation, characterized by asymmetrical attacks on the Malian defence and security forces , which are on the front line of the fight against terrorism. Those attacks have also targeted Blue Helmets, the French forces, civilians and even the signatories of the Agreement.

Regarding the other dimensions of the implementation of the Agreement, the Government's resolve remains steadfast. Joint patrols are becoming increasingly operational, as are the interim authorities and the emergency plan for the development of the northern regions. The State will step up its efforts to provide basic social services and peace dividends to the populations affected by the crisis.

Municipal and regional elections are planned before the end of the year. Only today, the Council of Ministers decided to hold the elections on 17 December. The Government of Mali has already acquired the materials for the elections.

With regard to the holding of the referendum and regional and local elections, I am pleased to announce to the Council that, under the budget amendment adopted by the National Assembly on 25 August, the Government of Mali has fully addressed the issue of the CAF18 billion gap mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. That is therefore no longer an issue.

Similarly, I would like to recall the promulgation by the President, on 2 October, of the law on the code for territorial communities, the law on the self-administration of local and regional authorities and the law on the special status of the Bamako district. Many of the provisions are intended to meet our commitments in the context of the Peace Agreement.

I should like to emphasize that, at the request of a certain part of the national community, the President has decided to postpone — and I underscore that it is merely a postponement, wheres the report mentions staying the referendum — the holding of the referendum on the draft review of the Constitution of Mali. However, the Head of State remains determined to pursue that major reform, as he believes it to be indispensable for the future of our country.

With regard to the processes of cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the Government of Mali calls on the signatory movements to cooperate in good faith in order to ensure the success of those programmes, which are crucial for the stabilization and restoration of security in our country.

For its part, the Government of Mali, which has already made enormous financial commitments, will respect all its obligations in the context of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. In that regard, the draft State budget for the financial year 2018, which is currently under consideration by the National Assembly, duly takes into account the need to finance the implementation of commitments undertaken through the Malian Peace Agreement.

In parallel with the implementation of the Peace Agreement in Mali, the Government is paying particular attention to the situation in the central regions of the country. As a result of that commitment on the central regions, we have appointed Mr. Mahmoud Dicko, Chair of the High Islamic Council, to work towards dialogue and reconciliation between the communities of the Mopti and Ségou regions. We have already seen very encouraging and appreciable results. In Ségou, the Prime Minister has just chaired the forum for peace in the fourth region, the conclusions of which have made it possible to hope for a gradual easing of the situation in the central regions. That is a concrete example of Malians themselves taking national ownership of the process.

As in previous reports, in the present report the Secretary-General expresses his concern about human rights violations in Mali — a situation of great importance. With regard to the cases of human rights violations and attackes listed in the report, the Government of Mali would of course like more information on the localities concerned.

With regard to the arrest of persons by the Malian authorities for acts of terrorism, the report mentions 116 persons arrested for terrorism, including 106 released persons, including five boys and two women. Information gathered from our judicial services since the publication of the report shows that it is rather four boys, not five. While it is a small difference, I think it is important to be precise. The four were handed over to the Regional Director of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family from the beginning of their questioning.

In addition, the report indicates that 239 people were detained for terrorism, including five boys, and that they were still in custody in State institutions. For our part, the technical services in charge of the issue have told us that out of a total of 277 people who were taken to the Judicial Investigations Service of the National Gendarmerie, 50 had arrest warrants for suspicion of terrorism. In 2017, out of 102 cases heard in the court of assizes, four individuals were convicted of violations of human rights or attempts to undermine human rights. On 31 August, at least 52 persons out of 132 plaintiffs were summoned by magistrates. Although no trial has been officially opened, the procedure is following its legally outlined course. For its part, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up by the Government has gathered 5,267 testimonies from victims and witnesses.

In any event, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Mali to respecting and upholding the norms of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. All cases reported in areas under Government control are systematically investigated and subsequent prosecutions are initiated against the alleged perpetrators. There is not, nor

will there ever be, impunity in the matter of human rights violations.

The Government of Mali welcomed the adoption of resolution 2364 (2017), which renews the mandate of MINUSMA. The resolution, which follows resolution 2295 (2016), calls upon MINUSMA to take a more proactive stance and endows it with a more robust mandate. However, it is clear that the major innovations brought about by the resolution have not been reflected in the situation on the ground. Accordingly, the Government of Mali strongly hopes that the operational capacities of MINUSMA will be strengthened by the Security Council in order to enable it to implement its mandate fully and effectively. I welcome the fact that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General made the same point.

Equally important is the strengthening of cooperation between MINUSMA and the Malian defence and security forces. I know that the Special Representative is equally committed to that important aspect, which will one day allow for the gradual withdrawal of the Mission. In particular, I would like to highlight the need and urgency of supporting the Maliand defence and security forces in their daily struggle against terrorism on the ground. That support need not wait for the completion of the reform process to be carried out. I welcome the fact that such a central issue has been taken into account by resolution 2364 (2017).

Similarly, the Government of Mali welcomes the inclusion in the renewed mandate of the important issue of MINUSMA's support for the restoration of the State's authority throughout the country, including through the return of the administration and Malian defense and security forces in all regions of the north of the country, particularly Kidal.

As the Council knows, the crisis in Mali is not a solely domestic one. It has regional and international dimensions, which are marked by terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in human beings. That is what brought about the creation of the Group of Five for the Sahel G-5 Sahel (G-5) Joint Force, whose deployment the Security Council welcomed. I also welcome the holding of the G-5 high-level meeting in New York, which featured the participation of the Heads of State of G-5 Sahel, the President of the French Republic, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. As a result of that meeting, I would like to call for more substantial and more consistent support from our bilateral and multilateral partners, with a view to mobilizing the necessary resources for the effective operationalization and efficient deployment of the Joint force. I call on all of our partners to participate actively in the planning and pledging conference for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force scheduled for mid-December in Brussels.

The violent and deadly clashes yesterday on the Niger-Mali border once again remind us of the urgent need for the rapid operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The current Chair of the G-5 Sahel, President Keita, has just issued a communiqué in which he condemns what took place yesterday in the strongest possible terms. He also reminds us of the urgent need to ensure that the G-5 Sahel Joint Force be operationalized as soon as possible in order to ensure that it can withstand those who are seeking to destabilize the entire region, including terrorists and armed groups.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the President of the Republic, to convey our sincere condolences to the people and the Government and the people of the Niger and the Government and the people of the United States of America. We must continue to stand together to keep up the pressure on these terrorist groups and win this battle.

I thank every member of the Security Council for their continued, invaluable support to Mali and to the ongoing peace process. I reiterate the eternal gratitude of the people and the Government of Mali to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and all MINUSMA personnel, the troop-contributing countries, the members of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, led by Algeria, and all other partner countries and institutions for their continued and multiform support to the peace and stabilization process in our country. On behalf of the people and the Government of Mali, I also pay tribute to the memory of all the victims of the Malian crisis — civilian and military, foreigners and nationals — who have fallen with honour in the line of duty in Mali.

In conclusion, I reiterate the resolute commitment of the President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, to maintain and intensify his efforts in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in the higher interests

of Mali and its people. The President is acutely aware of its responsibilities, but also and above all convinced that improving the situation in Mali will have a positive impact on peace and security in the Sahel and on international peace and security, which is the Council's primary responsibility.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8063

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8063rd meeting
Thursday, 5 October 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia (S/2017/801)

Letter dated 2 October 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2017/830)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-31067 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia (S/2017/801)

Letter dated 2 October 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2017/830)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Colombia to participate in the meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/801, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia, and document S/2017/830, which contains a letter dated 2 October 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"Following the completion of the 12-month mandate of the United Nations Mission in Colombia (the Mission) on 25 September 2017, the Security Council welcomes the remarkable achievements in Colombia following the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a stable and Long Lasting Peace reached between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army (FARC-EP).

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General of 25 September (S/2017/801) and welcomes the assessments, recommendations and lessons learned therein. The Security Council expresses its intention to take them into account in the context of its ongoing efforts to enhance the overall effectiveness of United Nations missions.

"The Security Council recalls resolutions 2261 (2016) and 2307 (2016) and congratulates the parties on the historic. progress made since the signing of the Final Agreement, including the culmination of the ceasefire, the cessation of hostilities, the process of laying down of arms and the transformation of the FARC-EP into a political party, bringing over five decades of conflict between them to a close. The Council pays tribute to the political will of the parties in achieving these milestones and to the leadership and spirit of cooperation they demonstrated in calling for the United Nations to partner with them in an innovative tripartite monitoring and verification mechanism (MVM). The Security Council emphasizes that their determination and commitment have ensured that Colombia's peace process continues to be a source of inspiration for the resolution of conflicts globally and retains the potential to set an example for peace processes elsewhere in the world.

"The Security Council expresses its gratitude for the exemplary manner in which the Mission, led by Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jean Arnault, accomplished the two tasks mandated to it by the Security Council, based upon the agreement by the parties, in having coordinated the MVM for the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and overseen the laying down of arms process. The Security Council underscores that this work played a vital role in supporting the successful implementation of the corresponding provisions in the peace agreement. The Council welcomes the Mission's work with the MVM to promote a gender-sensitive approach. The Council expresses its appreciation to the Mission for delivering the swift, flexible and tailored support envisaged by the Council and demonstrating the potential of the United Nations at its best.

"The Security Council also expresses its gratitude to the observer-contributing countries, particularly those from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. The Council also acknowledges the two guarantors of the peace process, Cuba and Norway, and the two accompanying countries, Chile and Venezuela.

"The Security Council notes the equally important work still ahead to implement the specific security, political and socioeconomic provisions of the Final Peace Agreement and reaffirms the need for both parties to fulfil their commitments to achieve a lasting peace. In that regard, the Council recalls resolutions 2366 (2017) and 2377(2017) which established and mandated the United Nations Verification Mission to verify implementation by the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP of the process of political, economic and social reincorporation of the FARC-EP and the implementation of personal and collective security guarantees. The Council trusts that the work of the Verification Mission will be a strong source of support and encouragement for Colombia's peace process."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2017/18.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/837, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2381 (2017).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): We meet today, just days after the first-ever bilateral ceasefire between the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). For the first time in over half a century, the guns between those two once-warring sides have fallen silent. That creates yet another historic opportunity for peace for the people of Colombia.

It is testament to our unity of purpose on that issue that, in the brief time that has elapsed, the Council has come together to adopt resolution 2381 (2017), authorizing the United Nations Verification Mission to support the monitoring of that ceasefire. In doing so, the Council has once again shown that it is ready to respond swiftly, positively and unanimously in support of peace in Colombia. As the penholder on the resolution, I want to offer my thanks to all Council members for their support in making it possible.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his recommendations, which outlined an effective and appropriate response to the ceasefire through the existing Verification Mission. I am also grateful to Special Representative Arnault and his staff for their quick work after the announcement on 4 September and during a complex phase of transition for the Verification Mission.

We know that this is just the start and we recognize the challenges faced by the parties just to reach this crucial point after months of talks in Quito. if that peace is to be built and sustained, all of their efforts will need to continue. Both parties share a responsibility for ensuring that the ceasefire improves the safety and security of all Colombians. It is vital that they seize the opportunity that this ceasefire presents. We may not see another opportunity like it for both sides to work towards a lasting peace. Therefore, let us do all we can to support the Government of Colombia and the ELN in that effort.

We can be proud today that the United Nations has been able to respond positively to the request of the parties. Through this adoption, we have again shown that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, stand ready to support Colombia on the journey towards peace.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2381 (2017) this afternoon. We commend the strong commitment of the parties in Colombia to peace. It is important that the Council stand with them.

The United Nations Mission in Colombia has played an important role in supporting the peace process. We would like to thank the Mission and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jean Arnault

for their excellent work. We would also like to thank the Special Representative for the efforts of the Mission on the inclusion and participation of women and we trust that this will be continued in the second mission.

We are happy to see that the Security Council could once again show its unity and strong support for the peace process in Colombia by quickly adopting a resolution that approves the recommendations of the Secretary-General to verify the ceasefire between the Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) — a ceasefire that once again shows the commitment of Colombia to moving forward, building on the momentum of last year. We want to praise the courage and leadership of the Colombian Government in that regard.

In our discussions as a Council, we repeatedly say that mandates must be clear, realistic and up to date, and that we must allocate the necessary resources for missions to deliver on those mandates. In this instance, that means making sure that the mandate to verify the ceasefire agreement with the ELN is realistic, including with regard to allocating the right resources. It also means making sure that the United Nations Verification Mission can live up to the mandate to carry out the additional task of verifying the ELN ceasefire agreement without affecting the implementation of its previously mandated tasks under resolution 2366 (2017).

We look forward to the Secretary-General's report, expected on 8 December, which will give us the opportunity to review the situation in order to ensure that the resource allocation is realistic and that the mandate is up to date.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by expressing Uruguay's renewed delight regarding the extraordinary progress of the peace process in Colombia. We are strongly welcome the temporary national bilateral ceasefire that was announced on 4 September by the Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), and its entry into force from 1 October 2017 to 9 January 2018.

We received and took very seriously the joint request of both parties in their Joint Communiqué of 29 September for the United Nations to participate as international coordinator in a monitoring and verification mechanism made up of representatives of the Government of Colombia, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional and the Catholic Church aimed at ensuring compliance with the temporary bilateral ceasefire.

In that regard, Uruguay welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2381 (2017), endorsing the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his letter dated 2 October (S/2017/830) and which will allow the United Nations Verfication Mission in Colombia to carry out the tasks requested by the parties.

To conclude, we would like to express the firm commitment of the United Nations, including the Security Council, to ensuring lasting peace in our brotherly country Colombia.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation supported the adoption of the resolution 2381 (2017), expanding the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The mission will now provide assistance in monitoring compliance with the temporary ceasefire agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. In addition to the achievements of the peace process with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, we hope that this ceasefire will complete the final solution to the lengthy internal conflict and achieve domestic peace in Colombia.

We value the support of the guarantors in this process: Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Norway and Venezuela. We expect that the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional will meet their obligations in good faith and that the Verification Mission will provide the necessary assistance to that end. We believe that expanding the mandate of the Mission by increasing its staff by 70 international observers and setting up an additional 33 posts is fully in line with the expectations of Colombia.

As to the Verification Mission, it has become an excellent tradition to develop the mandate of the Mission in close coordination with the Colombians themselves. Today's consensus vote clearly demonstrates that the Security Council is ready to provide constant support for the good faith of the two parties. We are convinced that the national ownership of the peace process by the Colombians is the main reason for these positive developments and the best guarantee for lasting peace and further developments. That is the most important lesson both for States that are experiencing a difficult chapter in their history and for the members of the

Security Council in considering the most complicated situations on our agenda.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2381 overseeing the ceasefire between the Colombian Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). Recently, the Colombian Government and the ELN reached a temporary ceasefire agreement, which representss major progress in the Colombian peace process. China congratulates and commends all parties for their efforts, including the Colombian Government.

Since the Colombian Government reached the ceasefire agreement and the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia last year, the Colombian peace process has continued to experience new progress, resulting in positive momentum in support of the dialogue for peace between the Colombian Government and the ELN, which has created conditions conducive to the early realization of comprehensive sustainable peace and stability in Colombia.

The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia started its work officially not long ago, and the adoption of resolution 2381 (2017) further strengthens its mandate. The Verification Mission, while advancing the implementation of the peace agreement, will oversee the ceasefire between the Colombian Government and the ELN. China hopes that the Secretariat will finalize its preparation work as soon as possible. In helping the Verification Mission to successfully carry out its mandate, we also hope that on the basis of respect for sovereignty, independence and the territorial integrity of Colombia, the Mission will strengthen communications with the Colombian Government and conduct good internal coordination work, while ensuring the comprehensive implementation of the mandate so as to provide constructive help to the greater outcome of the peace process in Colombia.

Ms. Tacho (United States of America): After 52 years of armed struggle, the United States welcomes the historic ceasefire between the Colombian Government and the National Liberation Army. We congratulate the parties on their commitment to pursuing the sustained and lasting peace that the people of Colombia deserve. We want to recognize the role of the Catholic church and Ecuador, in particular, for the special role that they have played and continue to play in brokering a longer-term peace.

Through resolution 2381 (2017), we join other members of the Council in supporting the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in monitoring the ceasefire, which will help build confidence between the parties and prevent a return to armed conflict. We commend the Mission for drawing on its existing staff, logistics and resources to take on this temporary additional task while carrying out its mandate to verify the political, economic and social reintegration of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

As the parties work to consolidate the security gains from the ceasefire, we recognize the work has just begun and that there will undoubtedly be challenges ahead, but we look forward to hearing the Secretary-General's update on the progress and implementation of the ceasefire in the coming weeks. With our vote today, the United States is proud to stand with Colombia as it continues on the path to a more comprehensive peace.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy) (*spoke in French*): Italy welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2381 (2017) extending the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to include monitoring the temporary bilateral ceasefire between the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). We also commend the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2017/18. on the conclusion of the mandate of the first United Nations mission in Colombia. The swiftness and flexibility with the Council has responded to the parties's requests demonstrate yet again the determined support of the United Nations to the peace process.

Italy. as a member of the group countries providing support and cooperation to the negotiations in Quito, welcomes the conclusion of the ceasefire agreement with the ELN, which bears witness to the parties' commitment to the search for a sustainable political solution to the conflict and the shared priority objective of protecting civilians. We encourage them to remain on this path with courage and resolve, and we join in the appeal made by the Pope during his visit to Colombia in early September. We also support the essential implementation of measures on security reintegration provided for by the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), and their

verification pursuant to the mandate of the second mission of the United Nations.

The peace process made historic progress last year, but there are now major challenges in its implementation phase. The United Nations can play a key role — the first mission, which recently concluded its work, bore witness to that — and will continue to support the efforts of the Government and the FARC-EP through the Verification Mission. The clarity of its mandate and its presence on the ground near the communities most affected by the conflict, and now exposed to the fragility of the transition, leave no doubt in this regard. However, the commitment and determination of the parties involved is the primary condition for the success of this process so that its scope and potential for regeneration can offer all Colombians new opportunities to participate in the political, social and economic life of the country.

To conclude, I wish to renew our appreciation for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team, and for the unity and effectiveness of the Security Council's work, to which Italy has had the honour of contributing.

Mr. Llorenty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Plurinational State of Bolivia welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2381 (2017), authorizing the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to begin the tasks assigned to the monitoring and verification mechanism, which will primarily verify the achievement of the historic bilateral, temporary national ceasefire agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional.

We thank the United Kingdom for its work and the way it conducted negotiations on the resolution. We are also grateful to all members of the Security Council for their support to this process and their commitment to resolving the last armed conflict in our region. We praise the leadership of the Government of Colombia and the decisiveness of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional in establishing the first bilateral ceasefire in this conflict, which is the result of recent progress in Colombia's peace process.

Similarly, I thank all Council members for committing to and supporting a process to resolve the longest-running armed conflict in my region. We commend the Government of Colombia on its leadership and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional on its decision to broker the first bilateral ceasefire in the conflict. We believe that it is the result of the recent progress Colombia has made in the peace process.

We trust that both parties have taken the necessary steps to make the process irreversible. Although we acknowledge the differences between this peace process and the process with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo, we have no doubt that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, and his entire team will continue to work just as hard as they have been working since they embarked on the path in 2016.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine reiterates its full support of Colombia's efforts in the implementation of the final peace agreement, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We welcome the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Colombia on 25 September, as was stated in the presidential statement S/PRST/2017/18, just adopted. We welcome the official beginning of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, the second United Nations special political mission to support the Colombian peace process.

We are also proud to note that, through its Mission in Colombia, the United Nations has contributed to the successful implementation of the crucial agreements on the ceasefire and the laying down of arms. I wish we had more people like that at the United Nations. That is why we believe that the United Nations should carefully study the lessons learned in Colombia and apply such best practices in other parts of the world.

We welcome the temporary national bilateral ceasefire announced between the Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional, and welcome resolution 2381 (2017), which supports that positive development. I would also like to express our appreciation to the British delegation for its leadership and hard work in preparing the draft resolution and presidential statement, which led to their successful adoption.

Finally, the Security Council should continue to provide the support required to advance peace, human rights and development for all citizens in Colombia.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2381 (2017) and the endorsement of the

Secretary-General's recommendations on United Nations support for the Mission tasked with verifying the temporary ceasefire between the Ejército de Liberación Nacional and the Colombian Government. In that regard, we thank the British penholder for its efforts.

We welcome, in particular the responsiveness of the United Nations and its readiness to assist the parties in the negotiations process. In one month, the Secretary-General and his team, in particular his Special Representative, Mr. Jean Arnault, have managed to submit proposals that would provide a swift and effective response to the request for support to uphold the temporary ceasefire. After the successful disarmament and political transition of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), we hope that the Ejército de Liberación Nacional will take part in the peace process to end the conflict with the Colombian Government.

The ceasefire and all commitments arising from it spark considerable hope for the current talks under way in Quito. The peace process conducted with the FARC demonstrates that the decades-long violence is not inevitable. We call upon all parties involved in the negotiations to respect their commitments, including those not covered by the United Nations Mission.The United Nations, along with the Catholic Church, will attempt to strengthen the climate of trust. Nonetheless, success depends, above all, on the political will demonstrated by the parties. France will continue to support United Nations action in Colombia — a great and friendly nation on a historic path of courage and determination.

In recent years, the country has shown that conflict is not inevitable. The will of the parties could reverse the course of history. By supporting the peace process, the United Nations was able to fulfil its mission of maintaining international peace and security. The will of the parties and the support of the United Nations have made the peace process in Colombia a source of inspiration for us all.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on steering the work of the Security Council this month and for convening today's meeting.

I would also like to congratulate the members of the Security Council on their vote of confidence in Colombia and in its efforts to build peace, through their unanimous adoption of resolution 2381 (2017), authorizing the United Nations Mission in Colombia to monitor and verify the temporary national bilateral ceasefire with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional, for a period of 101 days.

I would also like to thank the members of the Security Council for the statement adopted on their behalf, as it recognizes the historic progress that we have made. It is a tribute not only to the Government of Colombia, the parties, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional, but to the Colombian people, who acknowledge that they wish to rewrite the pages of history. We would like to, and we can, reverse the course of history as you, Sir, have just stated.

I would like to thank the United Kingdom for its invaluable efforts as penholder of resolution 2381 (2017). Its ongoing support was key to the Council's agility. It helped us to provide a very swift response to the needs expressed by the parties — through the Government and the Catholic Church, which we thank — by tabling today's resolution in a time frame that shows that the Security Council has flexible mechanisms through which the specific duties of a second special political mission could be assigned. That mission began on 26 September. We believe that the ceasefire was a historic undertaking for the Ejército de Liberación Nacional, a guerilla organization, which has never in its 53 years — as it is older than the FARC-EP — signed a bilateral ceasefire. We believe that this bodes well for the future.

In conclusion, I would like to make two points.

First, I would like to highlight the teamwork undertaken with Mr. Jeffrey Feltman and the Department of Political Affairs, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, which made a significant contribution to the process. He is now tasked with maintaining a gender perspective in the forces and the group of observers assisting us, and the vision for the region. The way in which the region united to support the two missions was remarkable. The region also stands with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional to foster dialogue in Havana and Quito, and by providing

support with troops, civilian observers and unarmed soldiers. It will also be providing civilian observers for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

Secondly, on behalf of the Government and people of Colombia, I would like to thank the parties involved in this endeavour and for the vote of confidence in us, which we hope to repay through a successful conclusion of the peace process and the 101-day bilateral ceasefire.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8064

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8064th meeting
Thursday, 5 October 2017, 3.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Strategic force generation

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Strategic force generation

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bangladesh and Canada to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Council will hear briefings by Mr. Lacroix and by the representatives of Bangladesh and Canada.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: I would like to start by thanking the Security Council for convening this briefing on strategic force generation. This is the first time that the Council dedicates a meeting to this topic, and today's discussion follows the adoption of resolution 2378 (2017), which showed the Council's strong commitment to strategic force generation as one of the core elements of peacekeeping reform.

Generating uniformed personnel and units for United Nations peacekeeping is a tireless and enormous task. It means generating and rotating more than 300 units, including 76 infantry battalions, with tens of thousands of troops and police from over 120 countries, while selecting and deploying several thousand individual staff and police officers throughout the year. That is done by a small team of dedicated officers, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to it.

Dozens of Member States have made substantial investments in their capabilities for United Nations peacekeeping by improving their equipment, training and levels of readiness. I am grateful to those Member States and look forward to hearing more today on how we can continue and further deepen that productive partnership.

(*spoke in French*)

In April, the Secretary-General presented an outline of what peacekeeping should strive for — a more adapted, agile and flexible instrument capable of responding rapidly and aptly to requirements on the ground, through being supported by strong competencies and good equipment based on the mandate provided by the Council. Strategic force generation is a tool to implement that vision. It entails identifying current and future operation needs and communicating them in a targeted and sustained way to Member States that may be able to satisfy those needs.

High level events, which began with the first summit on peacekeeping in 2014 and the creation of a Strategic Force Generation and Capabilities Planning Cell in 2015, have played a crucial role in that effort. The Cell worked closely with co-organizers and with other Member States to organize the summit of Heads of State and the Ministerial Meetings that took place in London and Paris. Of course, we are eagerly awaiting the Vancouver Meeting.

From the beginning, those events have brought together the major troop- and police-contributing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America, and have generated impetus. Various States representing all regional groups have participated in those events, including Member States of the Security Council. The subsequent meetings between Heads of State and police have allowed us to strengthen our commitment to Member States.

It is no exaggeration to say that Heads of State, Heads of Government, Defence Ministers, armed-forces officials and police forces around the world have never been so involved in supporting peacekeeping. The commitments and subsequent pledges have made it possible to fill capacity gaps in current missions, strengthen certain missions and cope with any new deployments that the Council has considered or might consider in the future.

In London, the system marked the first contribution pledges for rapidly deployable units. The final communiqué, which was endorsed by 63 Member States, set our new objectives for 2017 and beyond. In Paris, the specific needs were considered for peacekeeping in French-speaking areas and commitments were made to

provide more French-speaking military troops and police personnel. The creation of a Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) was a determining factor in our new approach for strategic force generation. The PCRS is constantly updated, thereby enabling us to understand which units are available by conducting evaluation and advisory visits, and to better understand their readiness levels and ability for deployment.

Since March 2016, we have conducted 39 evaluation visits concerning 105 deployable units. Those visits make it possible not only to identify which units are the most suited to certain operations, but also to explain in detail to contributing States the standards and technical specificities that are expected. Such dialogue is also essential as part of the general strategy to improve the conduct and discipline of deployed personnel, in particular as part of the strategy to prevent and combat sexual abuse and exploitation.

Those visits also sometimes make generating additional contributions possible, such as Jordanian helicopters to be deployed in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) or to identify priority areas for improvement with contributing States. Resolution 2378 (2017) calls on the Secretary-General to report on mechanisms to address capability gaps, and we will take the opportunity to outline how that is being done today and present a few ways of improving the coordination of efforts in the areas of training and capacity-building.

To date, 81 Member States have provided contributions to the PCRS, which is an impressive success only two years after its establishment. Twenty-nine PCRS units have already been deployed to missions, including in MINUSMA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). In recent weeks, we have received new pledges of contributions, the most recent of which came on behalf of China and Germany. I am very grateful to those two countries.

(*spoke in English*)

One of the key aims of our strategic force generation efforts is to facilitate more rapid deployment of uniformed capabilities to the field. Rapid deployment is a costly, complex and difficult process that requires the commitment of the contributors as well as the host country and neighbours. In the weeks and months that pass from the issuance of the mandate until the mission reaches a minimum operating capacity, lives can be lost and our credibility undermined from the outset. There are financial implications to long-deployment timelines, as a peacekeeping operation deployed too late will have a more intractable situation to address, potentially requiring a larger footprint and prolonging the life of that mission.

With the support of Member States and thanks to the concerted effort across the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, we have been making significant progress towards more rapid deployment. Just to take a recent example, we replaced a battalion in MINUSCA, in the Central African Republic, that was facing conduct and discipline issues with three different contingents in less than 60 days, two of them had registered in the PCRS. We are very grateful to the countries that contributed those units. Members States also agreed earlier this year that units accepted to the rapid deployment level of the PCRS would receive financial compensation for maintaining the readiness of their major equipment during their time on the rapid deployment level.

I am pleased to say that we recently received sufficient pledges to fulfil nearly all the requirements for a vanguard brigade of roughly 4,000 troops and police for the remainder of 2017 and the first half of next year. We plan to conduct an exercise of key personnel on the rapid deployment level and key United Nations personnel to further strengthen our ability to respond to future rapid deployments in the area. We are also developing an overarching rapid development concept and related training materials that bring together all of the civilian military police and support elements needed for rapid deployment.

Despite the success of the past two years, a number of specialized capabilities remain in short supply, particularly high-value enablers such as helicopters, quick-reaction forces, explosive ordnance disposal units with counter improvised explosive device training and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance companies. Pledges to the PCRS of those kinds of units are welcome, but it is precisely in our most challenging missions that we need them the most. I am also disappointed with the lack of progress towards our targets for female peacekeepers, and very much hope that Member States will attend the Vancouver Defence Ministerial Meeting in mid-November with concrete pledges and proposals.

One thing we have learned is that strategic force generation needs to be better linked to regular force planning for each mission, which also needs to be improved. The MINUSMA force generation conference in May was an important milestone in that regard. Member States discussed their plans for future contributions to Mali and potential partnerships for critical capabilities. We hope to build on that new effort to find creative ways to fill the most stubborn gaps, including by allowing troop-contributing countries to rotate scarce capabilities. However, no matter how creative we can be, we will need Member States to step forward, contribute new capabilities and help share the burden, particularly in Mali and especially in the most volatile areas.

The Security Council has a crucial role to play in defining and helping us meet the capability requirements of our missions. A number of permanent and elected Council members have stepped up to host high-level meetings, pledge and prepare new capabilities, offer training and capacity-building support and provide direct financial and political support to our strategic force generation efforts. That is fully consistent with the call for a more active role of the Council itself in force generation, and I strongly welcome it.

I also encourage Council members to come forward with new, innovative contributions, including through the provision of tailored and sustained training and capacity-building efforts to address our mid- to long-term capability gaps. The trilateral partnership between Japan and several African troop-contributing countries is a good example of that kind of initiative, and we strongly encourage further partnerships of that kind. There are a number of additional ways in which the Council can assist in helping us meet our capability requirements, and I will refer four of them.

First, the Council can take into account current or potential capability gaps, such as those in MINUSMA, when drafting or renewing mandates. That should be done in close consultation with us and is critical to managing expectations. Clear, prioritized mandates will enable us to better guide and assess the performance of uniformed capabilities.

Secondly, challenges relating to the timely deployment of capabilities, particularly for missions like UNMISS, are often associated with the consent and capacity of the host Government. Council members should engage collectively and individually to ensure that host Governments fully comply with the status-of-mission agreements and that the Council act accordingly when host Governments fail to do so.

Thirdly, strategic force generation is intricately linked with performance. The leadership of the Council is critical in ensuring the full implementation of our performance, training and conduct requirements. In instances where action must be taken to address underperformance or misconduct, the Secretariat relies on the consistent support of Council members.

Finally, I ask for the support of the Council in our efforts to foster a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation through strategic force generation and other reform efforts. We aim to create a virtuous cycle of performance improvement through assessment and advisory visits, regular in-field performance assessments, better planned rotations and deployments of new capabilities and training and capacity-building improvements. We will do all that together, working closely with troop- and police-contributing countries.

Strategic force generation is an important and still relatively new initiative. I am confident that it will help us to improve our uniformed capabilities significantly over time. It should also be seen as only one part of a broader, ongoing effort by the Secretariat to make peacekeeping operations a more efficient, effective and accountable tool for the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): I thank the members of the Security Council most sincerely for inviting me to provide a briefing on strategic force generation for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Earlier this week, Bangladesh hosted a preparatory meeting for the forthcoming Vancouver Defence Ministerial Meeting in November, with a focus on the innovative topic of smart pledges. The meeting was an occasion to review the pledges previously made by Member States to address the capability gaps faced by United Nations peacekeeping missions, especially those operating in certain difficult environments. I believe my Canadian colleague will further elaborate on that. Let me just say that the idea of smart pledges holds a lot of promise, but will need further deliberations among Member States to identify the right opportunities.

The challenges concerning force generation and rapid deployment have remained under discussion for quite some time. It was appositely brought to the forefront in the 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) (see S/2015/446). The Panel highlighted the struggle to get sufficient forces on the ground quickly enough and the continued reliance on underresourced uniformed capabilities with little or no interoperability and weak command and control. We would reiterate the importance of addressing each aspect of those challenges. In our efforts to find answers to force generation, we should not lose focus on the related questions of adequate resources for peacekeeping missions and effective command and control structure within missions.

The high-level open debate organized by the Ethiopian presidency last month (see S/PV.8051) and resolution 2378 (2017), adopted by the Council on the occasion, once again reaffirmed support for the HIPPO observations and recommendations. The debate furthermore stressed the importance of well-staffed and well-equipped missions and the right skill sets in order to respond to the increasingly robust complex and multidimensional peacekeeping mandates. As a leading troop- and police-contributing country, Bangladesh has remained particularly engaged in those ongoing discussions. It is encouraging to note that the issue of force generation and rapid deployment has been identified as one of the areas where substantive progress has been made in terms of implementing the HIPPO recommendations.

We have repeatedly made a case for discussing issues concerning strategic force generation under the purview of triangular consultations among the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat. The establishment of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS), which replaced the Standby Arrangements System, has was aimed at instituting a comprehensive platform for enhanced collaboration between Member States and the Secretariat towards redeeming the pledges made by Member States. On our part, we made efforts to readily adapt to the new arrangement and were perhaps the first Member State to have registered 13 contingents and 50 observers and staff on the PCRS.

Just to illustrate, from our armed forces we registered one infantry battalion, one engineering company, one level 2 hospital, one signal company and one transportation company. From our navy, we registered one riverine unit, two maritime units, made up of frigate and offshore patrol vessels, and one port operations unit, among others. From our air force, we provided one utility aviation unit, made up of three Bell-212 helicopters, and, lastly, two formed police units.

In addition, thus far, we have made a number of additional informal pledges. We look forward to announcing further pledges during the Vancouver Defence Ministerial Meeting. We also signalled that we would be in a position to deploy some of our contingents at rapid deployment level in fewer than 60 days. We have taken a principled approach to train our potential peacekeepers on the protection of civilians and on combating sexual exploitation and abuse, among a host of priority issues.

We have taken due note of the establishment of the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and underscored, in the context of last year's annual report (A/70/19) of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the need for enhanced prior consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries on such major initiatives. Our delegation has developed a sound working relation with the Cell and has so far worked in close partnership in facilitating DPKO assessment missions to Bangladesh in order to ascertain the deployment and training status of our registered contingents.

The leaders' summit on peacekeeping in 2015, which we had the privilege of co-hosting, was a milestone in the area of strategic force generation. It helped generate pledges by Member States for over 40,000 police and military personnel, as well as critical enablers including helicopters, engineering, logistics and transport units. The momentum was sustained through the London Defence Ministerial Meeting last year, and now the Vacouver Meeting, scheduled for next month.

We would encourage all troop- and police-contributing countries, including Council members, to consult the updated current and emerging uniformed capability requirements for United Nations peacekeeping and tailor their further pledges accordingly. There are critical mission-specific gaps in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti

that need to be addressed in order to respond to the challenging circumstances prevailing in the two former and effectively manage the transition in the latter.

The realistic, sequenced and prioritized mandates that we urge the Council to design and pursue in response to evolving ground realities will be able to deliver results only if the corresponding demands for capabilities and resources are sufficiently met. It would perhaps be advisable to review the current assessment criteria, frequency and consistency for the PCRS in order to make sure that the pledges registered indeed remain deployable at any given point in time.

The mandated scope of the PCRS may disproportionately affect potential troop- and police-contributing countries with limited or niche capabilities. It also merits further consideration if the current reimbursement arrangements for contingents and capabilities at rapid deployment level are viable in the medium to long term. It will be important for Council members to gain first-hand ideas about the prevailing gaps and challenges on the ground during their field missions.

The question of enhanced participation by female peacekeepers is integral to strategic force generation. The United Nations aims to increase female participation by 15 per cent by the end of 2017 — an initiative we support in principle — but, as we discern in our national context, that is far easier said than done. Bangladesh has made sustained contributions in the form of all-female formed police units in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti.

However, despite a strong push from our political leadership, we have not been able to reach our target with individual staff officers and observers. Our armed forces and police remain seized with this issue, not least due to our traditional commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. We look forward to further discussions on that issue during the Council open debate scheduled for later this month.

The issue of language skills for peacekeepers was discussed at the Paris Defence Ministerial Meeting with a focus on francophone theatres. As a co-host of the Meeting, Bangladesh made renewed pledges to developing the language skills of our troops and police in particular. This is perhaps an area where smart pledges, including the in the form of South-South cooperation, could come into play with tangible results.

To conclude, I would like to assure the Council of sustained commitments by troop- and police-contributing countries to mobilize our strength and capabilities to deliver on the mandates given for peacekeeping missions. In turn, we would expect the Council to remain sensitized and responsive to our suggestions and concerns and ensure that the mandates given are matched with adequate resources and support by all concerned in order to pave the way for our collective success.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Bin Momen for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank France and the United Kingdom for convening this important meeting on strategic force generation and for inviting Canada to brief the Council on the upcoming Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in the beautiful city of Vancouver.

(*spoke in English*)

I would also like to thank my colleague from Bangladesh and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for their very useful presentations today.

Canada is convinced that, when properly mandated, resourced and supported, peacekeeping remains one of the most flexible and effective tools available to the international community in responding to crises. But the nature of conflict is evolving, the operational tempo of peacekeeping is increasing and the scale and complexity of peacekeeping operations are growing. We have no choice but to anticipate, adapt and respond to the challenges. That requires reforming our collective institutions, enhancing operational effectiveness and making a sustained and collective effort to address capability gaps.

However, addressing capability gaps requires more than just supplying boots on the ground. It is about providing troops with the right training, capabilities and equipment, and doing so in a timely fashion. Strategic force generation is fundamental to that effort. And it is an area where we — Member States and the Secretariat — need to work together, differently and more effectively.

(*spoke in French*)

Since 2014, a high-level series of conferences have helped to bridge the gap between the operational needs of United Nations peacekeeping and the tremendous capabilities that Member States have to offer. From New York to London to Paris, we have not only seen an unprecedented number of pledges to United Nations peacekeeping, but also steps by Member States and the United Nations to introduce qualitative considerations into the discussion on force generation. Those annual events are now a key part of the institution of United Nations peacekeeping, complementing the work of this organ as well as the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. United Nations peacekeeping has a renewed sense of purpose thanks to the reforms proposed by the Secretary-General.

With those considerations in mind, Canada volunteered to host the 2017 United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting. We are not alone in that endeavour. We are honoured to be working in lockstep with 10 co-hosts — Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and the United States. The Ministerial Meeting will take place from 14 to 15 November in Vancouver. Participation is open to Member States announcing new pledges to United Nations peacekeeping. Much preparation has already gone into organizing and planning the Ministerial Meeting, including three substantive meetings, held in Tokyo, Kigali and Dhaka, which involved the participation of approximately 50 Member States. The meetings help pave the way for a successful Meeting in November. We are on track to reach the highest level of participation seen yet, and we have set equally high expectations for the outcome of the event.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada fully agrees with Secretary-General Guterres that conflict prevention should be one of the key priorities for the United Nations. Discussions in Vancouver will accordingly highlight the importance of integrated approaches to preventing violent conflict. Ministers will advance those objectives through panel sessions on the following themes.

First, participants will close capability gaps in United Nations peacekeeping by announcing new pledges and taking stock of pledges already in place. In particular, those include strengthening capabilities related to gender, police peacekeepers, as well as to peacekeeping in a francophone environment.

Secondly, we will identify concrete ways to strengthen partnerships on training and capacity-building between the United Nations, troops, police and other actors. We all have a common purpose in making United Nations peacekeeping operations more effective, and we have complementary skills and experiences to offer. It is time that troop- and police-contributing countries, along with the Secretariat, work closer together before deployments to ensure that all of our women and men in the field have the training they need and are able to operate as one.

Thirdly, we will examine how we can better protect those at risk by ensuring that our strategies align with the realities on the ground. That includes looking into what concrete measures can be taken to better address sexual exploitation and abuse and prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Fourthly, we will encourage greater coherence in early warning and rapid deployment by identifying innovative approaches, capacities and technologies to improve early warning, rapid analysis and planning capabilities. We will also look at ways to shorten new mission start-up times and ensure that we have filled the United Nations rapid-deployment requirements for 2018.

Given the leadership of Prime Minister Trudeau and Secretary-General Guterres, no one should be surprised that the Vancouver Ministerial Meeting will include the importance of integrating gender perspectives as its principal cross-cutting theme. In addressing our persistent failure to leverage the impact that women can have in prevention efforts and in securing durable peace, gender perspectives will be mainstreamed across all discussions. That will include enhancing the recruitment of female personnel, addressing barriers to their participation, providing training opportunities and combating conflict-related sexual violence, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse. Indeed, gender perspectives and the participation of women is directly linked to operational effectiveness and it is vital to prevention efforts and in securing a durable peace.

Most fundamentally, in the Canadian way, we recognize that inclusive partnerships are central to our shared success. The peer-to-peer nature of joint training, leading to better prepared and interoperable troops and police; the vital importance of working with

key regional organizations, such as the African Union, on a more equitable footing; the potential of joint smart pledges, which can provide the predictability of supply needed to enhance a mission's chance of success — all point to how we can do more to come together at a time when United Nations peacekeeping needs us.

We look forward to welcoming everyone in Vancouver.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Canada for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Lacroix, Ambassador Blanchard and Ambassador Bin Momen for their briefings.

I would like to begin by paying tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of the men and women of United Nations peacekeeping. They represent the very best of the Organization. We owe it to them and to those they protect to ensure that peacekeeping operations have the right capabilities for the mission at hand. That means the right people, with the right equipment and skills, carrying out the right mandate. How often do we actually meet that standard? How often, instead, do we hear of peacekeeping operations having to rely on whichever forces are available, rather than on the forces best suited to the mission?

Our ultimate goal must be to give the United Nations the freedom to tailor the forces it deploys according to the unique circumstances of each mission's mandate. We made a good start towards that goal, including at the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in London last year. But as our Canadian colleagues pick up the battle, it is clear that there is more to do. Let me outline three steps that we need to take.

First, we should not be afraid to innovate. We know that there are persistent gaps in niche capabilities, such as attack helicopters, specialist engineering skills and medical skills. We should not accept those gaps as an unavoidable reality, but instead look to countries to work together to rotate the provision of that scarce capability. That could mean one country providing those skills while another supplies the supporting logistics, sharing the burden and increasing the availability of that niche asset. Such innovative smart pledges will be one of the issues that the British Defence Secretary will raise in Vancouver.

Innovation also means incorporating modern technology to make peacekeeping more responsive and more effective. We have already made some progress on using unmanned aerial vehicles, but there are more technologies that we could be harnessing. To do so effectively, we need to be able to anticipate the future requirements of missions, which brings me to my second point.

Put simply, United Nations peacekeeping missions are not meant to stay the same. They are meant to evolve as the conditions on the ground evolve. As the mission's objectives are achieved and as political processes progress, force requirements will also change. We should be able to anticipate those changes and be agile enough to provide the capabilities required. That means moving away from setting arbitrary troop ceilings and instead moving towards a tailored approach that relies on better information on what capabilities are actually needed and when, so that we are more focused on the effects that we want the peacekeeping mission to deliver.

For example, next month we will be discussing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Many here will no doubt advocate for an increase in the troop ceiling. But the United Kingdom is more concerned that the Mission has the right troops. For us, that means troops who are agile and mobile, willing and capable of moving to where they are needed at short notice. We know that this approach works; we have seen it in action elsewhere. I would like to praise the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Pakistani contingent there for their agility in relocating troops to hotspots where they are really needed for the protection of civilians.

To help us anticipate future force requirements, we need rich, real-time data from the United Nations to inform Council decision-making. That analysis needs to be used also to inform force-generation decisions. We therefore welcome the call in resolution 2378 (2017) for the collection and analysis of data on peacekeeping performance. It is a really important step forward. Let us all work with the United Nations to make it a reality.

My final point is that we cannot lose sight of long-term planning and strategic force generation. That includes more partnerships, more training and more capacity-building, so that we are moving beyond the

immediate force generation to future strategic force generation, and so that we are preparing for future needs, not just filling the current capability gaps.

As we do so, let us not forget that the military force is just one of the three pillars of a mission. As missions become more involved in political work, we will all need to think about how we generate the civilian component and the policing component so that missions can play a role that has a significant impact, not just in keeping the peace but in building and sustaining it too.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank this month's French presidency for having agreed, at the initiative of the United Kingdom delegation, to hold this briefing on the important issue of strategic force generation. My thanks also go to my colleagues from Bangladesh and Canada, and of course to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix. Their briefings confirm that all peacekeeping operations continue to face a shortfall related to a lack of capacities and equipment.

The United Nations Standby Arrangements System for peacekeeping, which in all its iterations, has been used by the Secretary-General since 1948, to pool the resources of countries' forces and make them available for peacekeeping operations, has shown its limitations, especially with regard to settling current crises, which have become more numerous, complex and deadly. That serves to highlight the importance of today's meeting and shows our Organization's determination to confront the challenges in providing both standby forces and the capacities and sufficient number contingents with a view to contribute effectively to peacekeeping on the ground where asymmetrical threats are increasingly encountered.

It is encouraging that, following the leaders' summit on peacekeeping organized on the sidelines of the General Assembly in 2015 under the American presidency, the Secretary-General established within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations a Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell responsible for managing a new system for preparing peacekeeping operations and the process of force generation, known as the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS). Despite those measures, however, and the Ministerial Meetings held in London and Paris, the shortfalls encountered in implementing the mandates of peacekeeping operations remain glaring.

In addition to a lack of capacities owing to the insufficient number of contingents already deployed, the missions are having a difficult time meeting their own needs — for example, in terms of engineering, health care and aerial transport — although, as the representative of Canada pointed out, those capacities are available in numerous developed member countries. Those capacity shortfalls are even more salient for troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs), whose contingents are deployed in multidimensional missions and lacking the necessary means within a complex and insecure environment characterized, in particular by asymmetrical threats and hostile actions aimed increasingly at our Blue Helmets who are supposed to be protecting civilians.

That observation consequently led Senegal, in November 2016, to convene a ministerial open debate (see S/PV.7802) during its presidency of the Security Council on United Nations peacekeeping operations facing asymmetrical threats. The goal of that debate was to stimulate strategic thinking on planning as well as generation and the mandates of forces that must deployed in asymmetrical contexts. In truth, the capacities required for the full implementation of the mandates fall short in many cases in which the missions are carried out in the absence of a political process and the means to exit the crises. Consequently, the missions become protracted and their engagement becomes prolonged and uncertain.

In addressing that situation, and while maintaining constant cooperation with the troop- and police-contributing countries, the Security Council must explore new options with Secretary-General. One possibility is a framework for coalitions among States from among the membership or the region so as to generate forces within the structure of the PCRS in order to fill gaps in the area of operational capacity. In that regard, I recall that Senegal has already experimented with the concept of joint deployment — with Guinea within the framework of African-led International Support Mission in Mali, while waiting for the implementation of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which we discussed in this very Chamber this morning (see S/PV.8062). Similarly, together with Burkina Faso, Senegal proposed to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations the deployment of a unit of utility helicopters in Côte d'Ivoire prior to the closing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Based on firm partnerships between TCCs and PCCs in pooling capacities, the Security Council must strongly encourage seeking partnerships and defining the basic needs that will allow for the rapid mobilization of sufficient forces to respond to the increasing number of crises, especially when the latter emerge unexpectedly. Such an approach could include non-regional partnerships supervised by the United Nations. Accordingly, we believe that the upcoming Defence Ministerial Meeting in Vancouver, which the Ambassador of Canada mentioned earlier, can be included in that type of cooperation within the framework of smart pledges through, for example, intelligent advertising.

In the context of cooperation involving regional and subregional organizations, standby arrangement systems and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises could also serve to fill the gaps. Our experiences gleaned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, the African-led International Support Mission in Mali and the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic have demonstrated that countries neighbouring those in conflict were the most amenable to intervene in a timely manner. Senegal therefore encourages strengthening African systems through the deployment of Member State contingents so as to contribute to overcoming the difficulties observed, and, at the same time, draw on the lessons learned from the transitions that have taken place in Mali and the Central African Republic.

In that same regard, the Council and the Secretariat, in tandem with TCCs and PCCs, could pursue and further strengthen inter-mission cooperation, which proved to be very constructive in sporadic or fixed-period force generation to reinforce the operational capacities of United Nations missions. In the same vein, the Senegalese rapid reaction force, through its deployment from Côte d'Ivoire to the Central African Republic, was able to ensure the holding of the 2016 presidential elections in the Central African Republic, thereby providing an inspiring example. That same kind of operation is already envisioned, but this time it will originate in Mali, where the Senegalese rapid reaction force is already deployed, and take place in Liberia, where general elections are to be held.

Henceforth, countries will be able to play the role expected of them to fill the most glaring gaps, most of which require enabling units or new technologies. Fortunately, with the leaders' summit on peacekeeping operations and the Ministerial Meetings in London and Paris, the leaders of contributing countries have been showcasing their firm belief, in and commitment to, investing more in peacekeeping operations. In other words, through strong political will, Governments can show more commitment to the United Nations in providing it with what is required.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the problems often encountered in force generation by African countries in general.

First, the Statement of Unit Requirements, which defines the basis for generating and deploying United Nations military units, poses non-conformity issues with regard to how units from contributing countries are structured. TCCs and PCCs should look for solutions to the task of calibrating batallions, with a view to completing the mandates and duties that they must carry out.

Secondly, strategic force generation specifically intended for peacekeeping can undermine the capacities of contributing countries, whose scant security and police personnel may already be facing significant domestic undertakings.

Overall, we welcome the interest we are all according to the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations in the wake of the report (see S/2015/446) of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, the reform of the peace and security pillar of the United Nations initiated by the Secretary-General, the adoption of resolution 2377 (2017) and the meeting of the Council on this issue held on 20 September (see S/PV.8051), where nearly every Council was represented at the level of Head of State, Head of Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank you and the French presidency, Sir, as well as the United Kingdom for organizing today's important meeting on force generation for United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is indeed a very important matter that needs to be considered seriously by the Security Council as part of the efforts to reform United Nations peacekeeping. We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing. We also appreciate the remarks by the Ambassadors of Bangladesh and Canada. We value their contribution.

Obviously, the United Nations depends upon Member States to generate forces for its peacekeeping

missions. In that regard, securing sufficient forces with the necessary capabilities to be deployed on the ground quickly has been a challenge. Mr. Lacroix was right in highlighting the enormity of the challenge. The bureaucratic arrangements in the Secretariat have also been posing constraints on the speed, mobility and flexibility of response in the field. That is why there is a need for a new approach to strategic force generation, as recommended by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). That certainly requires undertaking important reform efforts to change the way that the United Nations mobilizes and deploys its uniformed personnel. We take note of the efforts undertaken in that regard.

The establishment and operation of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System in the Secretariat represents a step in the right direction. We look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations in December, which will be presented to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 2378 (2017), with regard to a mechanism to fill the existing gaps in force generation capabilities, including through more effective and efficient training and capacity-building.

As the HIPPO report (see S/2015/446) correctly put it, force generation is not only a technical and operational issue to be left to the Secretariat. Achieving progress on the issue requires the mobilization and political support of Member States. That is why greater consultation with current and potential contributors is absolutely imperative for providing timely, adequate and relevant information, so as to help them make informed decisions regarding contributing personnel. Therefore, as stressed by all previous speakers, there is a need to enhance the triangular cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop/police-contributing countries. The increase in the number of countries contributing to United Nations peacekeeping, including by some permanent members of the Council, is encouraging. We support the high-level efforts that have been over the past two years to ensure greater participation by Member States and secure concrete commitments and pledges to fill existing gaps with respect to force generation and capabilities. In that context, we look forward to the upcoming Defence Ministerial Meeting, which is scheduled to take place in Vancouver next month.

While continuing to increase the quantity and quality of pledges by Member States remains significant, equally important is the question of whether or not the pledges already made are being implemented. That certainly requires continuous follow-up and regular updates by the Secretariat on the issue, in line with resolution 2378 (2017), which is very important.

Finally, the new approach to strategic force generation should also support and encourage regional capabilities, such as the African Standby Force. Those regional forces play an important role as first responders and have demonstrated their ability to serve as bridging forces until the United Nations is ready to deploy its own forces. Therefore, we very much hope that the Secretariat will develop options for both regional and global capacity to rapidly deploy capabilities, including to serve as bridging forces, in accordance with the HIPPO recommendations.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Ambassador Momen of Bangladesh and Ambassador Blanchard of Canada for their briefings.

We are grateful to the French presidency for convening today's timely debate, which follows a series of related discussions throughout the year that demonstrate the Security Council's seriousness in strengthening peacekeeping as one of the most important activities of the United Nations. I would like to express special appreciation to Ambassador Fodé Seck and Ambassador Nikki Haley for convening a special meeting of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations at the Permanent Representative level two days ago. It provided us with an excellent and unique opportunity for Council members and troop-contributing countries to get together for an in-depth discussion. I would like to focus today on two key points: first, on the significance of force generation and, secondly, on how effective and efficient training and capacity-building can improve force generation.

Force generation is closely linked with the Council's responsibility for overseeing the success of mission mandates. The gaps that we see today between actual and desired capabilities of peacekeepers in some areas are detrimental to achieving success. The report (see S/2015/446) of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations indicates that the capability issue is one of the various challenges in force generation, while resolution 2378 (2017), adopted in September, also stresses the need to address the issue of capability gaps.

The role of the Secretariat, which oversees the force generation process to implement Council

mandates, is key in minimizing those gaps. Several efforts have been made, including the establishment of the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell and the Peacekeeping Capacity Readiness System (PCRS). Japan welcomes those initiatives and urges the Secretariat to continue to undertake realistic, cross-mission efforts that help missions adapt to realities on the ground.

Successful force generation is about deploying peacekeepers with the right capabilities at the right time. Japan emphasizes that effective and efficient training and capacity-building are essential. Japan underlines the call in resolution 2378 (2017) for the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on a mechanism to address training and capacity-building.

We note that, while force generation efforts by the Secretariat are cross-cutting in nature, as demonstrated by the PCRS, capacity-building has remained largely the focus of troop-contributing countries (TCCs), with occasional donor country support. Those efforts have so far been bilateral and could benefit from a cross-cutting and coordinated approach. The successful force generation conference for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali earlier this year offers a positive model and could be expanded to all other missions as a best practice. Further involvement on the part of the Secretariat could also be helpful. It could play a more active role in matchmaking between potential troop-contributing countries and supporters who can help TCCs prepare for challenges on the ground. We should also explore whether the potential exists for making further use of the Strategic Force Generation Cell and the PCRS in that regard.

Effective and efficient training and capacity-building measures can be achieved only through cooperation among four actors — the Council, troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and potential donor countries. Japan has already launched discussions in that regard, including with Canada and Bangladesh. We co-hosted a preparatory meeting in August with Bangladesh in advance of the 2017 United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in Vancouver. Effective and efficient training and capacity-building will enable better force generation efforts, and ultimately a better performance by peacekeepers. Given that the Secretary-General's 90-day report, as mandated by resolution 2378 (2017), is due by the end of the year, Japan is prepared to follow up on the topic during its presidency in December.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): I would like to thank the French presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely and important debate on strategic force generation for United Nations peacekeeping operations. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, and Ambassadors Momen and Blanchard, of Bangladesh and Canada, for their briefings.

Conflict prevention and maintaining peace are among the key founding objectives of the United Nations, and an efficient peacekeeping system is a primary requisite for achieving them. We therefore fully endorse the Secretary-General's initiatives aimed at reforming United Nations peacekeeping, with a focus on effectiveness, mission accountability and new partnerships. While we want to emphasize the primacy of politics in conflict prevention and resolution, our peacekeeping forces remain a valuable tool for ensuring the creation of conditions conducive to political solutions. We have been witnessing significant changes in the United Nations peacekeeping system, with Member States making important new commitments at the leaders' summit on peacekeeping in New York and subsequent ministerial meetings on the topic.

Kazakhstan has declared its unit and number of individual officers in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS). We believe that the PCRS has shown itself to be the right instrument for ensuring adequate preparedness on the part of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries (PCCs) to be deployed. It can also provide the United Nations with a range of contingents for filling operational gaps in field missions, if properly facilitated by the Secretariat.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), with its unique database on the capabilities and strengths of Member States, plays a key role in force generation through its targeted outreach approach and by facilitating partnerships between TCCs and PCCs that can increase co-deployments. Enhancing cooperation between regional and subregional organizations is a vital contributing factor. We are certain that the flexibility and partnerships that can enable the active involvement and engagement of countries new to United Nations peacekeeping will increase the effectiveness of peace operations. We would like to note the DPKO's forward-looking approach to engaging the emergency-

response capabilities of Member States that have solid rapid-deployment capacities, something that will be invaluable when we need to react immediately to crises while peacekeeping forces are still being generated. With the further improvement and development of the PCRS, we believe that the problems the United Nations has with critical gaps in missions will be dealt with.

At the same time, the hybrid United Nations-African Union missions have shown that the deployment of regional forces can be effective. Such cooperation should be strengthened on the political, humanitarian, human rights and development fronts as well, as indicated in the agreement on the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed on 19 April. Collaboration with regional structures can also enable concerted action in tackling security challenges. The Security Council's recent adoption of resolution 2378 (2017) is a great step forward in the efforts to improve United Nations peacekeeping. Kazakhstan would like to emphasize the importance of strengthening triangular consultations between the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat, which will encourage shared responsibility for meaningful, inclusive and dynamic consultations and enhance their dialogue with host countries so that they can fully implement their peacekeeping mandate.

Kazakhstan is committed to peacekeeping and will continue sending well-qualified military observers and increasing its contribution. Kazakhstan is currently preparing an infantry unit for participation in peacekeeping operation and exploring the possibilities for co-deployment to one of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. As an emerging troop-contributing country, we are constantly increasing our preparedness levels, as the DPKO has confirmed. Kazakhstan attaches great importance to achieving high performance standards and has therefore established its own peacekeeping training centre, KAZCENT, which has already been recognized as achieving international standards. We conduct courses on a regional basis and will work to attain the status of a regional training centre.

Lastly, Kazakhstan stands ready to support effective peacekeeping and thereby further the mandate of the Council.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We appreciate your organization of today's meeting, Mr. President. The briefings by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and by the representatives of Bangladesh and Canada on behalf of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs), were helpful.

We believe firmly that it is essential for United Nations peacekeeping activities to adapt to current realities so that the Blue Helmets can effectively implement their mandates and stand up to new challenges. That applies equally to the training and functioning of units involved in United Nations peacekeeping operations. What is important in that regard is not only the professional preparation and competence of personnel but also missions' ability to deploy in a timely fashion and their mobility on the ground within the framework of their mandate from the Security Council. In that context, it is crucially important to ensure that peacekeepers have all the resources they need as soon as possible so that they can provide security and accomplish their mandated tasks. In that regard, both the Secretariat's Department of Field Support and to the troop-contributing countries have an equally responsible part to play. We cannot emphasize the importance of the TCCs' contribution enough. It is impossible to carry out the Security Council's mandated tasks without them.

We firmly believe in the importance of close cooperation and coordination of efforts between the Security Council, the host Government, the troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, not to mention of direct, good-faith contact between United Nations field missions and their host countries. It is that kind of interaction, based above all on transparency and accountability and thereby on trust, that helps to improve effectiveness in dealing with urgent problems. Obtaining host countries' consent and support would help missions in their operational activities as well as their political ones, an essential component of their ability to effectively fulfil their mandates. It is also important to take into account the views and concerns of troop-contributing countries in developing and extending mission mandates. In that regard, we appreciate the various existing tripartite cooperation mechanisms, including regular meetings and the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. We believe that there is potential there for increasing their effectiveness.

The most important platform for discussion and decision-making on the full range of peacekeeping

issues is the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. When the Secretariat makes administrative decisions it should make sure that the Special Committee's conclusions are strictly observed. Any arbitrary interpretation, such as occurred with the issue of the collection and analysis of information, is completely unacceptable. The same applies to the issue of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. Any reports of such dreadful crimes should be thoroughly investigated and their perpetrators punished. However, we are also convinced that it is counterproductive to apply collective punishment to entire contingents for egregious, yet individual, violations.

Russian peacekeepers — both men and women — currently take part in 10 United Nations peacekeeping operations. We also actively provide aviation services to the United Nations. Both our own peacekeepers and foreign peacekeepers — individual and formed police units — undergo training in Russian training institutions. Furthermore, we assist in equipping foreign contingents. We have the relevant experience and have developed a system of training that ensures both general and specialized training, which is provided directly before peacekeepers are deployed to their relevant missions. Linguistic training is also adapted to the needs of peacekeepers. We are working on developing additional training centres for peacekeepers. We are looking into the possibility of swiftly deploying any peacekeepers requested by the United Nations. We are ready to continue to provide support in strengthening United Nations peacekeeping capacity.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that, regardless of how United Nations peacekeeping evolves, what should remain unchanged is our confidence in peacekeeping, which depends upon clear adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of peacekeeping — the consent of the host State, impartiality and the non-use of force, with the exception of self-defence and the protection of the mandate.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his comprehensive briefing and the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to reform and improve United Nations peacekeeping operations. I also thank the Ambassador of Bangladesh and the Ambassador of Canada for their insightful briefings, as well as the French presidency and the delegation of the United Kingdom for holding this meeting, which is an opportunity to harmonize United Nations peacekeeping reform efforts.

Over the past two years, reform and review efforts have focused on operational and technical aspects, especially with regard to broadening the base of troop- and police-contributing countries and force generation. Those efforts have included developing the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System and holding the 2015 and 2016 Ministerial Meetings in New York, London and Paris. It is now time for the Council to ensure that those efforts take shape and are in line with mandates. In that regard, I would like to make the following three points.

First, Egypt believes that force-generation and capacity is contingent upon effective trilateral consultations among the Security Council, troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and the Secretariat. Such consultations contribute to a clear and comprehensive vision for mandate design and review that takes into account United Nations capabilities, political developments and the situation on the ground at every stage of conflicts, on a case-by-case basis. Such consultations are particularly important when it comes to adopting sequenced mandates — a welcome measure that would ensure the effectiveness of missions, rather than prolonging them for decades. That would allow the Council to make realistic and actionable decisions when renewing, reviewing and amending mandates. In that regard, Egypt fully supports the efforts of the United Kingdom and Pakistan.

Secondly, as part of peacekeeping reform, significant efforts have been made to enhance training, strengthen compliance with the command and control chain and delegate authority to the field to make urgent decisions, which, in many cases, directly impact the effectiveness of missions and the reputation of the United Nations. Force-generation and TCC expansion must not come at the expense of performance standards, equipment availability, training and strict conduct and discipline standards, including combating sexual exploitation and abuse. Performance assessment must be based on clear parameters and peacekeeping policies, in close consultation with TCCs.

The availability of training, capacity and equipment and the protection and safety of civilians must go hand in hand. Recent months have seen an increase in attacks

against contingents — for instance, in the Central African Republic and Mali. Such incidents have served to expose gaps in protection capabilities, including in training, equipment, availability of information and risk assessment. Those gaps must be urgently addressed to enhance the credibility of peacekeeping operations and protect personnel, who are the most important assets of those operations.

Thirdly, with regard to capability gaps, I would like to note that Egypt has provided specialized units to the most difficult United Nations operations, as we pledged. As part of our support to peacekeeping operations, we have provided much-needed equipment to a number of underequipped missions, including the provision of 100 armoured vehicles. In addition, we pledged an advanced engineering unit as part of the rapid deployment force. In addition, Egypt upholds the highest standards in the training our military and police forces. We organize specialized predeployment training, in particular on sexual exploitation and abuse.

In line with United Nations training standards. Egypt contributes to the training and capacity-building of new TCCs. The Cairo Centre for Training in Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa hosts training courses for candidates from African and other countries. As part of our focus on training and readiness, Egypt hosted the meeting of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres in September. The meeting addressed future training needs holistically, in the light of the latest developments in the peacekeeping security field and the role of missions as part of an approach that is based on a continuum of response.

In conclusion, in line with our continued support to peacekeeping operations, we announced at the Security Council, the General Assembly and in a formal letter to the Secretariat, our willingness to host the 2018 Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting. We hope the Meeting will pave the way for a qualitative shift in our joint efforts to promote the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates France and the United Kingdom's initiative in convening today's meeting, and we would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, and Ambassadors Momen and Blanchard, of Bangladesh and Canada, for their briefings.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are an important component of the Organization's efforts to maintain international peace and security. Since peacekeeping forces operate on the ground under the Council's mandates, enhancing their ability to deploy rapidly, strengthening peacekeepers' capabilities and improving their mandates are critical to their greater efficiency and effectiveness. In that context, I would like to make the following points.

First, we should consistently uphold the basic principles of peacekeeping operations. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the three peacekeeping-operation principles — the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence or defence of the mandate — constitute their foundation and remain irreplaceable in guiding operations in a new context. The sovereignty of host countries should be fully respected and their input and views taken seriously in order to help them scale up their security capacities. When a host country requires the withdrawal of a peacekeeping operation and the circumstances permit, the Council should give the Secretariat guidance on drawing up a clear exit timetable, to ensure that the mission will not remain in the host country indefinitely.

Secondly, we must fully recognize the role of troop-contributing countries (TCCs). Ultimately, it is peacekeepers who ensure the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and the TCCs and police-contributing countries (PCCs) are the main actors in implementing those operations, carrying out their mission on the front lines in support of the Organization's fulfilment of its responsibilities as mandated under the Charter of the United Nations and making great sacrifices through their contribution. The long-term development of peacekeeping operations also depends on the efforts of TCCs and PCCs, and they must be acknowledged and respected. In that regard, we should strengthen the triangular communication between the Council, the Secretariat and the TCCs. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should play its full role as a policy review body and give TCCs more say on peacekeeping issues.

Thirdly, we should increase efforts to help TCCs with capacity-building. For peacekeeping operations to be able to implement their mandates, full and focused predeployment training and reliable provision of all the necessary resources, including equipment, are essential. Operations must therefore be provided with the training and resources they need. It is important to pay close attention to the real needs of TCCs from developing

countries and the challenges they face, as well as to encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation in strengthening their peacekeeping capacity-building. We should also give particular attention and support to regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, so that they can play a bigger part in maintaining peace and security in Africa and help the continent improve its peacekeeping capacity-building.

Fourthly, it is essential to define a clear, actionable and targeted mandate for every peacekeeping mission. Mandates instruct and guide every mission in its operations and are an important determinant of their effectiveness. The priority needs and realities of host countries, as well as the TCCs' capacities, should be considered together in order to keep operations focused on the core task of peacekeeping. Priorities for the different phases of an operation can be modified as and when any change is needed, while keeping the host country in the driving seat for the sake of effective mandate implementation.

Fifthly, the Secretariat should provide better support and assurances for peacekeeping forces in terms of both efficiency and quality. Where its role in managing peacekeeping operations is concerned, the Secretariat should look at the big picture for peacekeeping operations and their long-term development, as well as working to make them more effective and better able to address complex situations with concrete measures. The Secretariat and missions should pay close attention to peacekeepers' security and medical service capabilities and should guarantee them. Systems for tracking and assessing the security situation on the ground must be set up and early-warning capabilities for security threats and intra-mission information-sharing improved. Every mission should commit to strengthening its training in the deployment phase, which should be tailored to the realities of the mission's area of operations. For its part, the Secretariat should improve management standards and efficiency, optimize logistics support mechanisms and ensure that peacekeeping resources are utilized effectively.

At the United Nations peacekeeping summit in September 2015, China's President made an important commitment to supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations, and China is currently pressing ahead with the implementation of that commitment across the board. In the past two years, we have trained more than 800 peacekeepers for the United Nations and some countries concerned and have dispatched a first helicopter squadron to a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Africa. We are now in the process of delivering $100 million in free financial aid pledged to the African Union and have made support for the peacekeeping capacities of TCCs, especially those from Africa, a priority of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund. In September, China officially completed the registration of its 8,000-strong standby peacekeeping force as a United Nations standby mechanism. We had already generated two standing peacekeeping police units and registered them under the United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. Our first batch of personnel and equipment has been certified by the United Nations as rapid-deployment-ready. Those efforts demonstrate China's active support for the United Nations PKO and its commitment to assuming more responsibility internationally while meeting its obligations as a major player, and we believe they will make a constructive contribution to global peace and regional stability.

As the biggest TCC among the permanent members of the Council and the second biggest donor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, China will continue to make a firm and honest commitment to maintaining world peace and joining the rest of the world in advancing the noble cause of United Nations peacekeeping.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to the briefers for their valuable information.

It is obvious that any peacekeeping operation relies on appropriate force generation to be able to deliver on its Security Council mandate. My delegation therefore considers the issue of ensuring strategic force generation to be an integral part of the comprehensive reform of United Nations that the Secretary-General has outlined. The establishment of the Strategic Force Generation and Capacity-Building Cell and the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System has been a significant step forward in the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/682). The 2015 leaders' summit got the registration of pledges by troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries (PCCs) off to a good start, and the subsequent Defence Ministerial Meetings in London and Paris gave that initiative an important additional impetus. Ukraine is proud to be among those who joined the pledging process from the very beginning. In addition, my country, as a participant

of all of those meetings, will also take part in the Vancouver Defence Ministerial Meeting next month.

The establishment of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System has provided peacekeeping operations with force generation ability, flexibility and predictability, three things they had been badly in need of for a long time. As a result, where equipment and expertise are concerned, peacekeeping operations are becoming better adapted to carrying out their mandated tasks. However, as the concept note points out, there are still many opportunities for improving the efficiency of mandate delivery on the ground. In that regard, I would like to highlight several ways whereby the Council could contribute to strengthening force generation for peacekeeping operations.

The Council should take dialogue with TCCs and PCCs to a new level, both through its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and by continuing formal and informal consultations during the establishment and renewal of operation mandates. In that regard, we were pleased to note the meeting of the Working Group held just a few days ago with the participation of the members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, a good move, fully in line with revised presidential note S/2017/507 and resolution 2378 (2017), on peacekeeping reform, which we adopted just a few weeks ago.

Missions should be provided with clear, coherent, achievable, sequenced and, at the same time, resilient mandates drafted in accordance with the core principles of United Nations peacekeeping. To that end, the Council should receive timely, frank and substantive reports from the Secretariat as well as details of the Secretary-General's bold initiatives and options for a reformed United Nations peacekeeping presence. In that regard, Ukraine supports the Secretary-General's plans for restructuring the peace and security pillar of the Secretariat, and we expect that this will also result in improvements in the strategic advice given to the Council. It is clear that we will have to closely monitor and assess practical progress in every single mission's implementation of its mandate, identify those that need restructuring and view every mandate through the perspective of supporting a political solution to the conflict in question.

With regard to capability gaps, due attention should be paid to securing the proper funding and providing sufficient aviation assets, both combat and cargo, as well as making use of advanced intelligence and modern technologies. When the Council is considering a mandate's establishment or renewal, it should engage more actively with the parties to a dispute and the host country with a view to securing the operation's use of appropriate modern technologies. It should also support and facilitate the strengthening of operations' intelligence capabilities in order to improve their situational awareness. All those aspects are critically important to ensuring the security and mobility of peacekeeping personnel.

Last but not least, United Nations peacekeeping operations must be provided with properly trained and equipped personnel, capable of taking robust action to execute their mandate on the ground and ready to do so. Impartiality should also continue to be a priority principle when the composition of a peacekeeping operation's personnel is being considered. For its part, the Security Council should closely monitor the implementation of resolution 2272 (2016) and continue to support the Secretary-General's initiatives in the area of peace and security, including on eradicating sexual violence in United Nations peacekeeping.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Ukraine will do its utmost to continue to be a reliable partner of United Nations peacekeeping endeavours, even at times when my country may itself require United Nations peacekeeping assistance in the light of ongoing foreign aggression.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing and the representative of Canada for his update on the upcoming Defence Ministerial Meeting in Vancouver and for hosting it. I would especially like to commend and thank Bangladesh for its contribution today. The input of Bangladesh, as a major troop-contributing country (TCC), is very important. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our condolences to Bangladesh for its recent loss of peacekeepers in Mali just a few days ago.

Let me begin by paying tribute to all the men and women who have served in United Nations peace operations. Their commitment and dedication have saved countless lives. Many have lost their lives in the service of the United Nations and, as others have said, we owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

For us, the Secretary-General's proposal for reform of the peace and security architecture aims to create

a better framework for more effective United Nations peace and security efforts. It is vital that we give him our full support and stand united behind him in that endeavour. Among other things, his proposal seeks to strengthen the link between political strategies and operations. That is a prerequisite for success and must remain our point of departure when we consider how best to configure peace operations. It is essential to ensure that peacekeeping operations have the capabilities they need from the start.

We must also continue to explore concrete options for more sustainable and predictable financing for all Security Council-mandated peace operations, including through assessed contributions. It is important to keep in mind that reform and efficiency are not primarily budgetary questions. They are about delivering better with the resources available. Efficiency should be measured in deliverables, the criteria for success and the performance indicators on how well we keep the peace and protect those who need protection.

Mandates that are more realistic, prioritized and flexible, and better tailored to their context, will increase the potential for a successful outcome. There must be opportunities to make course corrections and adjust when things are not working. That requires frank input from across the system and from troop- and police-contributing countries. Flexibility will ensure that operations are tailored to the specific challenges on the ground. To achieve that, we must empower those on the ground and strengthen leadership capacity, as the Secretary-General proposes.

Operational plans based on clear and measurable objectives, accompanied by benchmarks for follow-up and reporting back to the Security Council, should guide integrated mission planning and leadership. The inclusion of operational criteria for success can help to sequence the campaign plan and thereby mitigate capability shortfalls.

All of the above require informed analysis from the Secretariat, including sound, strategic military and police advice, based on troop-to-task analysis. As many colleagues have already said, improving the Council's ability to give dynamic and strategic mission mandates will demand greater frankness in the manner in which the Secretary-General reports to it and presents options for its consideration.

A stronger common understanding of operational needs, shared with troop- and police-contributing countries during the force generation process, will also make it possible for smaller contributing countries to join together to provide the United Nations with unique capabilities. One example of that is the contribution by my country, together with Norway, Portugal, Denmark and Belgium, of C-130 air transportation for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Another is multinational training teams with the ability to train personnel in United Nations mission headquarters in the field so as to improve cohesive command and control.

We welcome resolution 2378 (2017) and look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations on a mechanism to fill existing gaps in terms of force generation, including through effective and efficient training and capacity-building. Contributing countries have a responsibility to ensure that peacekeepers are properly prepared, trained and equipped to meet the challenges they will face in the field.

Troop-contributing countries' meetings related to the mandates of peace operations are important. However, we should do more to realize the full potential for interaction between contributing countries and the Secretariat, thereby enabling the Secretary-General to provide the Council with in-depth and strategic military and police advice. For that reason, we need more predictable, uniform and coherent processes for triangular cooperation and dialogue. The additional TCC meeting on MINUSMA in January led to a more open process, which has contributed to the Secretariat's new and welcome approach to mission-specific strategic force generation. That resulted in the MINUSMA force generation conference in May. We truly believe that this format can strengthen the force generation process.

As we all agree, troop-and police-contributing countries must fully adhere to the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. We commend the Secretary-General for his leadership on the issue, including the event on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse held during the high-level week. As requested in resolution 2272 (2016), we must be prepared to replace military units and formed police units when the appropriate steps to investigate allegations have not been taken.

We are deeply concerned about the increasing risks that our Blue Helmets face in difficult and complex environments. The Council, together with the troop- and police-contributing countries, has a responsibility

to ensure that the commanders and troops that we send into the field have all the tools they need to protect both the communities they serve and themselves. We firmly support new capabilities, such as the use of modern technology, qualified air assets and peacekeeping intelligence assets. They are key force multipliers that can improve performance and reduce casualties. Denying the development of that type of capability hampers United Nations forces' ability to protect themselves and civilians. Those capabilities, together with enhanced training and equipment, will enable us to become more agile and do a better job with less risk. In addition, reaching the goal of at least 15 per cent female observers and staff officers in the field will increase missions' effectiveness.

To sum up, we believe that force generation can benefit from greater openness and transparency in the process, increased frankness and better strategic military and police advice from the Secretary-General to the Council, sequenced mandates with prioritized tasks and the use of enhanced new capabilities that reduce risks and improve performance.

My country has a long tradition of participating in United Nations peace operations, with more than 80,000 Swedish women and men having taken part in them to date. From our very first group of military observers, who participated in the Golan Heights in 1948, to our current engagement in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Sweden's commitment has remained firm. We will continue to contribute and do everything we can to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping can meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): Mr. President, I would like to thank you and your delegation for proposing this briefing. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his remarks and the representatives of Bangladesh and Canada for their contributions.

International stability is increasingly at risk. Therefore all Member States, within their own capabilities, should provide a qualified contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Italy is doing its part as a global security provider. Besides being one of the most generous financial contributors to the peacekeeping budget, we are also the top contributor of Blue Helmets from the Group of Western European and other States. We are currently participating in the United Nations peacekeeping missions in Lebanon, with more than 1000 units, Cyprus and Mali, and in the Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan.

However, beyond United Nations peace operations, our defence and police forces are also providing assistance and protection in other areas around the world — from Somalia to Afghanistan, from Iraq to Libya, and in the Mediterranean, the Sahel, the Arab Gulf, the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Wherever its assistance is required, my country spares no effort to build capacity across the board, from border security to election security, from justice and correction practices to the fight against organized crime and all types of trafficking.

Peacekeeping operations have capability gaps. There is an urgent need for air assets to improve the mobility of troops, medical assets to provide assistance and fast medical evacuation and to civilians if needed, and units for explosive ordnance disposal to remove mines and improvised explosive devices. Technology is key to increasing the safety and security of peacekeepers. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has effectively and efficiently improved the gathering of information and provided enhanced situational awareness that is crucial to the safety and security of peacekeepers and the protection of civilians.

Italy has provided many resources to the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System in terms of manoeuvre units complemented by enablers. Since the System was created in 2015, we have fully supported it, offering units from the national basket of forces prepared with dedicated training cycles. We will confirm our commitment at the next Defence Ministerial Meeting in Vancouver.

Another major gap in peacekeeping operations is the role and presence of women. As stated in resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security — in particular resolution 2242 (2015) — we need to increase the number of women in United Nations military and police contingents. All Member States should do more to that end. The recruitment of a growing number of women at the national level today will result in a greater gender balance in the medium term. The participation of women at all levels is key to improving the effectiveness and performance of missions. Their role is indispensable to all peace and security efforts.

Training is vital to improving capability and ensuring that mandates can be effectively delivered on the ground. Since 2005, the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza — which is run by our Carabinieri, together with instructors from the United States and other African and European countries — has offered qualified training for United Nations peacekeepers, based on high professional and ethical standards, through specific training modules on the rule of law, international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians, the protection of historical and cultural heritage, preventing sexual and gender-based violence in conflicts, and the broader women and peace and security agenda.

Those training programmes develop standards and common operating approaches to be applied during robust police activity. We are convinced that future peace operations will be increasingly based on specialized police units focused on stabilization, the rule of law, justice and the protection of civilians, in line with the reform of the peace and security, architecture envisaged by the Secretary-General, which emphasizes the need to focus more on prevention, mediation and peacebuilding.

It is therefore crucial to train peacekeepers to protect people, key values and principles so as to ensure the credibility and reputation of the United Nations. In that context, let me highlight that Italy has joined the Circle of Leadership created by the Secretary-General to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuses, signed the voluntary compact to eliminate the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuses, and contributed to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

In terms of strategic planning, we should not forget logistics. The capacity of operations to deliver and accomplish their mandates is closely related to the swiftness of deployment and the operational effectiveness of field missions. The United Nations Global Service Centre, which has been located in Brindisi since 1994, is a fundamental hub to provide logistical support to peacekeeping missions around the world. We should maximize efficiency in delivering services. We should also pay attention to the management of the environmental footprint of field missions throughout their life cycles. A lighter footprint would allow for cost efficiencies, improved safety and security for troops and civilians in host countries, and eventually better mandate delivery.

Finally, we are fully committed to working together for smarter, more effective and successful peace missions. Therefore, we need to provide missions with the capabilities they require to deliver their mandate, keeping in mind the decisive importance of the human factor. I therefore wish to thank all the women and men who are serving, and have served, the United Nations peacekeeping missions across the world. I also pay tribute to those that have lost their lives over the years.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his very useful briefing, which enables us to understand in greater detail one of the main activities designed to consolidate international peace and security. We are equally grateful to the representatives of Bangladesh and Canada for their most relevant briefings.

To begin, we pay our most sincere and heartfelt tributes to all personnel of United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world, who spare no efforts in fulfilling their missions. In the same vein, we are grateful to the countries that contribute troops — be they military, police, observers or civilian personnel — for their generosity to, solidarity with and commitment to the system of the United Nations and countries that suffer the vagaries of conflicts.

Within the framework of peacekeeping operations, the force generation process carried out by the United Nations clearly entails a complex system that must be developed and implemented in a timely and efficient manner, in line with realities on the ground and in consultation with host and troop-contributing countries. Consequently, in order to effectively and adequately provide the economic, human and material resources necessary to the missions, a technical, logistical and, above all, political analysis is required, in accordance with the mandates designed by the Council, which must be more realistic, accurate and better-focused.

Given the multidimensional nature and the varied roles of peacekeeping missions, we believe that their capabilities must be strengthened. Force generation must not solely be the work and responsibility of the Office of Military Affairs or the Force Generation Service. Rather, it must be the result of synergies among all members of the system, which must contain elements that generate coherence in the planning and evaluation in the aftermath of missions. In that sense, responsibility must be shared.

We consider it vital that the implementation of analysis and planning processes for missions be less bureaucratic. The concepts of operations must be the priority and simultaneously linked with the political decisions made by the Security Council when it designs mandates. In that sense, we must test our Organization's ability to design and implement a mandate that is appropriate to needs on the ground. We believe that it is necessary to improve institutional agility for the deployment of troops, and to choose the best-trained troops and those with greater specialization to respond in increasingly complex asymmetric contexts.

It is clear that the international scene is not static. It is undergoing significant transformations. Constant threats by terrorist groups and transnational crime against international peace and security highlight the need for peacekeeping missions to be subject to structural changes that allow them to adapt more efficiently to their respective contexts in order to repel those threats.

We highlight the efforts of the United Nations and Security Council to achieve the objectives of the mandates in force, and we call for unity among all actors to strengthen the financial, tactical, operational and strategic areas on the ground, in strict adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and in full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States. Moreover, the improvement of the material and technological factors must make peacekeeping missions more effective in carrying out their missions. It should be noted that adequate equipment and training of troops are the responsibilities not only of troop-contributing countries, but also that of our Organization as a whole.

To conclude, it is also worth mentioning that no peacekeeping mission can be successful if it does not enjoy the support and backing of the host country. In that regard, the ongoing and smooth coordination and exchange of information among missions and local authorities are essential.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): I thank the briefers, Under Secretary-General Lacroix and the Ambassadors of Canada and Bangladesh, for their contributions and updates.

The United States is pleased to have played a central role in refocusing the United Nations and Member States on the importance of force generation at the leaders' summit in 2015. In recognition of the critical importance of multinational peace operations and the challenges they face, the international community has rallied behind the series of ministerial conferences to raise awareness about capacity shortfalls in peacekeeping and expand the pool of available resources to address them.

From the first summit here in New York, those meetings have focused on deliverables. We are pleased with what those conferences have achieved, as over 40 delegations have made pledges aimed at fundamentally improving peacekeeping. Those pledges have since materialized into concrete assets that address mission-critical needs on the ground, such as the Nepalese engineering unit deployed to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, the Senegalese tactical helicopters sent to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, and the Croatian special forces unit deployed to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Through our bilateral peace-operations capacity-building programmes, the United States is further assisting partner countries to fully develop pledge capabilities, particularly those that address chronic capability gaps. For our part, in 2015 the United States pledged to develop and deliver curriculum to address policing in extremist environments and add specialized training to increase police peacekeepers' survivability in mission. To date, we have delivered that training to four Cameroonian formed police units deploying to the Central African Republic and two Senegalese formed police units deploying to Mali.

We look ahead to the Vancouver Defence Ministerial Meeting as an opportunity to both analyse new pledges and solidify existing pledges. Pledges alone, however, will not address growing peacekeeping demands. The United States encourages the registration of all pledges to ensure that commitments can ultimately be converted by the United Nations into actual deployments, increased capacity and better peacekeeping.

As mission mandates and operating environments grow increasingly complex, we need units that are fully trained and equipped to deliver the desired effects on the ground. That means peacekeeping units that are trained in both core military or police skills, as well as in mission-specific needs. The work of the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell has

been instrumental in the registration and assessment of potential peacekeepers for deployment.

Since the establishment of the Cell and the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS), we have seen improvement in how the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) manages force generation and deployments. It is critical to the success of United Nations peacekeeping that the Organization identify the most appropriate forces for peacekeeping missions and expand the available base of troop- and police-contributing countries. We need to continue to improve the speed and methods it uses to do that.

To match the progress we have seen on force generation, the United Nations needs to better forecast future requirements, including ground units, but also leadership, sustainment, information and mobility systems. Institutionalizing that kind of strategic planning, improved early warning capacity and structural changes at United Nations Headquarters in New York would enable United Nations leaders to respond quickly and decisively to new crises.

In addition to the Cell and PCRS, we support the further development of the DPKO operational readiness assurance and performance-improvement policy as a vital tool for collecting data on troop and leader performance. Peacekeepers are truly the international community's front lines. Because mission success can be a matter of life or death for civilians who rely on peacekeepers for protection, as well as for the peacekeepers themselves, we urge the United Nations to make force protection and deployment decisions based on objective performance data.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is an example of how performance-based decisions can lead to marked improvements in how peacekeeping missions deliver on their mandate. To address the shortcomings that led to UNMISS troops' failure on several occasions to intervene to protect civilians under attack in and around United Nations bases, the Secretary-General directed the Mission to undertake a number of steps to improve performance. UNMISS has subsequently better defended its bases against attacks and effectively projected peacekeepers to respond to emerging humanitarian crises, such as protecting 50,000 new displaced civilians in May.

Transparent, objective analysis of field performance through the performance-improvement policy and other existing mechanisms will support the identification of capability gaps and help bilateral supporters of peacekeeping better target contributions to meet the requirements of troop- and police-contributors. It will assist troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to understand where improvement is needed and help donors match training and equipment contributions to existing needs.

As a donor, the United States has provided over a quarter of a billion dollars-worth of capacity-building support bilaterally to TCCs, and those systems can help us target future assistance. To that end, we strongly support the United Nations in working to strengthen how it collects, manages and analyses data on peacekeeping operational requirements and unit field performance. Increasing the availability of objective information to support performance-based decision-making will make missions more effective on the ground and promote the overall legitimacy of United Nations peacekeeping.

We are committed to helping peacekeepers improve training and capability, but if a mission's forces are not able to fulfil their mandate, we need to know and we must be flexible enough to change our approach. We owe that much to both our peacekeepers and the critical missions they are sent to accomplish.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the delegations of France and the United Kingdom for their joint initiative to convene a briefing on the topic of strategic force generation in peacekeeping operations. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Canada for their briefings.

Uruguay believes that strengthening strategic force generation is an essential component in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. The timely availability of uniformed and civilian personnel who are sufficiently trained and equipped is key to the success of peacekeeping operations. Likewise, we cannot conceivably implement mission mandates fully if they do not have the capabilities commensurate to the challenges they must face.

It is important to acknowledge that in the reform process — based on the recommendations of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446) — encouraging progress has been made on the part of the Secretariat, mainly in its Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, and Members States on the whole. By way

of example, the establishment of the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell, together with the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, has significantly contributed to guaranteeing the increased availability and timely deployment of peacekeeping capabilities. In that regard, we encourage the Secretariat to pursue its efforts in close coordination with troop- and police-contributing countries.

The Security Council, as the organ that authorizes mandates, has the direct responsibility to ensure that peacekeeping deployed personnel have optimal conditions in which to fulfil their duties. Today's concept aptly takes up the issue of the efforts the Security Council could make in terms of strategic force generation to contribute to the success of peacekeeping operations. In the view of my delegation, the Council could significantly contribute in the following ways.

First, with regard to the design and planning stages, and even the reconfiguration phase, of a peacekeeping operation, we believe that it is key for the Security Council to attach greater importance to identifying the needs and capabilities required to fulfil a mandate. Planning should be based on clear, achievable and prioritized objectives with benchmark criteria and an exit strategy that permits a reduction of the mission and an adequate transition to a successor entity when said criteria is met. Trilateral cooperation among the Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs) is fundamental in that regard.

The Secretariat, in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS), plays a determining role in terms of providing advisory support in decision-making processes, including, inter alia, on specific equipment and personnel needs. With regard to equipment, allow me to add that obtaining it cannot depend upon the financial capacity of a single country. New technologies are expensive, and therefore it is essential to work on alternatives to obtain it — for example, through the development of greater cooperation TCCs and PCCs, the Secretariat and donor countries.

Moreover, when it comes to decision-making, the Security Council must fully take into account the views of TCCs, as they are the ones serving on the ground. That could greatly facilitate the planning of operations, thereby ensuring that personnel have the capacity to respond to new demands. Specifically, it is a matter of working to minimize the gaps between those who draw up, plan, administer and implement operations, as well as to underscore the enormous benefits of a productive relationship among them.

Secondly, it is highly important that deployed personnel be adequately trained, with a particular emphasis on predeployment training. It is essential that peacekeeping personnel are educated and trained for the tasks to be conducted in the area of operations. That requires a joint effort by TCCs to promote greater training standards for their personnel, as well as the Secretariat in carrying out the relevant evaluation and monitoring programmes. We acknowledge the excellent work of DPKO and DFS together in the development, implementation and validation of regulations and advice in peacekeeping training, especially in the areas of human rights and the protection of civilians and against sexual abuse and exploitation.

Thirdly, and finally, we should not focus solely on force generation but also on the full functionality of peacekeeping forces once deployed. That has been a topic to which my delegation has constantly and specifically referred throughout its nearly two years as a member of the Security Council. Unfortunately, as a frequent issue within several peacekeeping operations, this a matter on which the Council should assume greater responsibility. We are talking about obstacles on the ground that also have a negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations. On the one hand, particular attention should be given to national restrictions — so-called caveats — whether they are declared or, even worse, non-declared, given that they can undermine the fulfilment of mandates. On the other hand, the Council should demand full respect, and compliance by host countries, with the terms agreed in status of forces agreements, which constitute the guarantees that protect the personnel whom a country voluntarily contributes to peacekeeping operations.

We are also concerned to have witnessed an increase in the frequency of deliberate attacks against United Nations personnel and facilities, which have led to significant loss of human life and equipment. On this issue we believe that we should, inter alia, provide our troops with a greater number of tools to confront the new realities — for example, passive defence measures and strengthening the rules of engagement — as well as exhausting all possible avenues to ensure that those responsible for such crimes are held accountable.

In conclusion, politically as well as on the ground, my country reiterates its commitment to strengthening capacity in force generation in peacekeeping operations. On the political level, Uruguay is honoured to co-host the Vancouver Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in November. Among other things, the goal of the meeting is to continue efforts in force generation and follow-up on the promises and pledges made by various Member States at various multilateral meetings held between 2015 and 2017. On the ground, Uruguay continues to contribute peacekeeping personnel to various missions, having recently concluded its contribution to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti following its successful closure. We reiterate our constant and long-standing commitment to peacekeeping operations, while we also continue evaluating the possibility of further pledges in line with our capabilities.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I would like to thank each and every one of those present for their statements, which highlight one of the essential dimensions upon which the effectiveness of peacekeeping depends: strategic force generation. France is glad to have been able to organize this briefing during its presidency, in partnership with the United Kingdom. I am also pleased that Bangladesh and Canada were able to share their experiences and their vision. I thank the Secretariat for its investment in this major area of work, and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his particularly enlightening briefing.

The problem discussed at this meeting arises from the obvious fact that peacekeeping operations can succeed only if their forces are appropriately trained, equipped and led. In that context, strategic force generation should respond to three requirements at the very least: clarity, innovation and globality.

First of all, we must be clear-minded and practical about the needs of peackeeping operations. Force generation should be based on the identification of current gaps and elements obstructing the carrying out of operations. This is, of course, a short-term requirement, and we must constantly adapt the capacity of peacekeeping operations currently deployed and mobilize their critical capacity, making it possible to quickly respond to changing situations on the ground.

But force generation is also a long-term project. It is the tool with which we must lay the foundations for the peacekeeping operations of tomorrow, as well as the instrument that the United Nations must employ to anticipate personnel, equipment and technology capacities that will make it possible to respond to conflicts in five, 10 or even 20 years. Trilateral dialogue between the Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat contributes significantly to this process. Such an approach should bring about a vision of peacekeeping possibilities that the Council should nurture in order to establish mandates that are both ambitious and realistic and that can respond to challenges on the ground. We welcome the work already done to achieve these goal, particularly in New York, London and Paris in 2015 and 2016, as well as next month at the Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in Vancouver. I commend Canada's commitment to the full success of that important ministerial conference.

In addition to peacekeeping needs in terms of medical, aerial, technological and engineering requirements, the Paris Meeting, on peacekeeping in a French-speaking environment, recalled to us another requirement, namely, that peacekeeping operations must have sufficient language skills in the national language of the country in question if they are to be able to effectively counter threats, gain the confidence of people and lay the foundations for lasting peace. In order to respond to this requirement, France, in partnership with the International Organization of La Francophonie and its member States, has established language programmes for non-French-speaking troop- and police-contributing countries. Through the Boutros-Ghali Observatory for Peacekeeping, launched in October 2016, it supports the efforts of French-speaking troop-contributing countries to develop their participation in peacekeeping operations. As I indicated yesterday at a round table organized at the Headquarters of the Permanent Representation of the OIF, I wish to renew my invitation to all Member States willing to do so to join this initiative and get involved with steering it.

On the strength of this clear-mindedness, force generation must be guided by ambition and innovation. The establishment of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System within peacekeeping operations was a historic step forward. It helps to identify a reserve force of trained, equipped and operational troops endowed with a use doctrine that can be deployed in less

than 60 days. We welcome the commitment of troop-contributing countries such as Bangladesh, which have committed themselves to this mechanism. We support the efforts of these countries and of the Secretariat to continue developing and refining it.

Many other innovations have followed that one. The force-generation conference for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, held last May, was a major milestone for the predictability in peacekeeping capabilities. We therefore welcome the initiative of several Member States, including the Netherlands, Germany, Jordan and Belgium, and also Norway and Portugal, to coordinate the provision of air transport on a multi-year basis. This approach has given solid operational prospects for the Mission. However, we must continue our efforts because, 18 months after the Security Council authorized the raising of the troop-ceiling, the Mission still suffers from a deficit of nearly 2,500 troops — a gap that needs to filled in the current security environment.

The development of such joint commitments, associating several Member States to generate critical capacities, must be encouraged. These arrangements derive from the capabilities and complementarities of each contributor country in terms of providing troops, training, financing or equipment. France is fully committed to this and is providing both predeployment training and operational training to over 25,000 African military personnel a year, across numerous deployed peacekeeping operations. We must collectively encourage the development of triangular partnerships, including by making the most of regional initiatives.

I come now to my last point. In order to bear fruit, force generation must be part of a global approach. The issue of deployment and support for capacity-generation is a key element. Efforts to modernize strategic deployment must be extended so that these units can deploy quickly, as soon as the need is identified. Operational and strategic support must also be adapted so that these units can make a difference over the long term having been endowed with the appropriate resources.

Issues of sustainability and medical support must also be at the core of our concerns. Modernizing management processes, in particular through delegation and accountability closest to the ground, must also contribute to the performance of peacekeeping. The global approach also requires looking beyond the military contingents; adequate capacity mobilization is also necessary in the police and civilian spheres. In many theatres of operation, the increase in the proportion of women deployed in United Nations police units should make it possible to better respond in the missions these units are called upon to complete. Civilian components must acquire the expertise needed to carry out their tasks. In any case, linguistic competence remains essential to the success of peacekeeping.

On the strength of a lucid, innovative and global vision of peacekeeping, we can ensure together that the United Nations through its peacekeeping operations will continue to meet everybody's hopes and expectations. The Council can rest assured of France's resolute commitment to this end.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8065

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8065th meeting
Tuesday, 10 October 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Gueguen	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Aytbayev
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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17-31753 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Following consultations among the members of the Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya.

"In that regard, the Security Council endorses the United Nations Action Plan for the resumption of an inclusive Libyan-owned political process under the facilitation and leadership of the United Nations, which was presented by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ghassan Salamé at a high-level event on Libya in New York on 20 September 2017. The Council welcomes the briefing provided by His Excellency Mr. Faiez Serraj, Prime Minister and President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, on recent political, security and humanitarian developments in Libya. The Council reaffirms resolution 2259 (2015) and acknowledges Mr. Serraj's important role in promoting national reconciliation.

"The Council welcomes the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's objective to support a Libyan-led transition that will lead to the establishment of stable, unified, representative and effective governance under the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). The Council welcomes the swift movement to initiate this process, specifically the meeting of delegates from the Libyan House of Representatives and High State Council under the auspices of Special Representative Salamé, which commenced on 26 September 2017. The Council looks forward to further sequential implementation of the Action Plan ahead of the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections within a year.

"The Security Council strongly urges all Libyans to work together in a spirit of compromise and to engage constructively in the inclusive political process set out in the Action Plan. The Council reiterates the importance of the meaningful participation of women throughout the process.

"The Security Council reaffirms that the LPA remains the only viable framework to end the Libyan political crisis and that its implementation remains key to holding elections and finalizing the political transition. The Council encourages the Libyan parties to work quickly and cooperatively to amend and fully implement the LPA to enable further progress set out in the Action Plan. The Council recalls paragraph 5 of resolution 2259 (2015) and reaffirms that any attempt by Libyan parties to undermine the Libyan-led, United Nations-facilitated political process is unacceptable.

"The Council underlines that there can be no military solution to the crisis and reaffirms the need for all parties in Libya to exercise restraint and refrain from any violence or actions that could undermine the United Nations-facilitated process. The Council calls on all Libyans to respect the ceasefire, as called for in the Joint Declaration issued after the meeting in Paris on 25 July 2017.

"The Security Council welcomes recent efforts to strengthen an inclusive political dialogue among all Libyans, including important efforts by Libya's neighbours, international partners and regional organizations, and stresses that all such initiatives should be consolidated under the leadership of the United Nations as called for by the United Nations Secretary-General and echoed by His Excellency Mr. Faiez Serraj, Prime Minister and President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord. The Council emphasises the imperative for all Member States to support the primacy of the United Nations mediation in Libya.

"The Council also welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment on behalf of the United Nations to building stability, security and national unity in Libya, as well as his personal engagement in support of the political process and economic recovery.

"The Council expresses its concern at the deteriorating security, economic and humanitarian situation in Libya, and looks forward to further details on the United Nations plans to continue ramping up its presence in Libya as well as plans for a new round of voluntary funding for the United Nations Stabilization Facility for Libya and recommendations to increase strategic coordination of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Libya.

"The Security Council further welcomes the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's commitment, on behalf of the United Nations country team, to intensify the United Nations work on the ground to help improve the living conditions of all people in Libya, including migrants.

"The Security Council expresses concern over the threat of terrorism and trafficking in persons and illicit goods, which risk undermining Libya's democratic transition. In this regard, the Council reiterates the need for unified and strengthened national security forces, under a unified, civilian Government. The Council reiterates that all parties must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law as applicable.

"The Council welcomes the Libyan-led efforts in fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and other individuals and groups on the United Nations ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list in Libya. The Council urges all Libyans to unite in their fight against terrorism.

"The Security Council expresses its intention to monitor progress on the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to provide such updates in his reporting in line with resolution 2376 (2017)."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2017/19.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8066

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8066th meeting

Tuesday, 10 October 2017, 10.15 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Gueguen/Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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17-31747 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Responsive Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): The parties to the conflict in Yemen are pursuing a futile and cruel military conflict, which is eroding the path to peace. At the same time, the people of Yemen are suffering from an entirely man-made humanitarian catastrophe.

Clashes and exchanges of heavy fire have continued on all major frontlines, including Taiz, Ma'rib, Al Jawf, Al Bayda, Hajjah and Sa'dah governorates, and the Saudi-Yemen border areas. The recent sharp increase in civilian casualties show the parties' continued disregard for the loss of civilian life and their obligations under international humanitarian law. An airstrike against a residential suburb of Sana'a took place on 25 August reportedly resulted in the killing of 14 civilians and the injury of 16 others, and caused further damage to civilian infrastructure.

In Taiz city, shelling of residential areas from zones controlled by Houthi forces and forces loyal to Ali Abdullah Saleh has continued. In two incidents on 15 and 18 September, rocket-fire killed and injured tens of civilians, including eight children. In addition, on 23 September the coalition intercepted a Houthi missile fired towards the Saudi city of Khamis Al-Mushayt. The Houthis' recent threats to expand the firing of ballistic missiles towards other countries in the Gulf region represent a counterproductive escalation of rhetoric.

Resolution 36/31, recently adopted by the Human Rights Council, supports the Yemen National of Inquiry and establishes a group of experts to examine alleged violations and abuses of international human rights and international law. It is a significant sign of the increased engagement of the international community and a step forward towards accountability and reducing future violations.

I have consistently reminded the warring parties of their responsibilities under international humanitarian law and human rights law, including their obligation to stop the recruitment of child soldiers and to end sexual and gender-based violence. Targeting civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure are unacceptable.

The conflict is creating a desperate situation in every facet of daily life. The economy is shrinking even further and the use of dwindling State revenues to fund the war continues to hinder the salary payments on which millions of Yemenis depend. There are continuing efforts to reactivate the Central Bank and stabilize the Yemeni economy, as recently discussed in the track-II event held in Germany for the interest of repayment of salaries to Yemeni civil servants, including those in the education and health sectors. This will hopefully decrease the humanitarian and economic strife.

Appproximately 17 million individuals are food insecure, and over one third of the country's districts are now in severe danger of famine. The destruction of infrastructure and the breakdown of public services have fuelled the world's worst outbreak of cholera, which has already killed more than 2,100 individuals and continues to infect thousands each week.

If things remain unchanged, future Yemeni generations will have to suffer and bear the burden of this conflict — including the massive destruction, malnutrition, lack of education and economic deterioration it has caused. In the absence of a political solution, the outlook can only become bleaker. An agreement to end the war is urgently needed so that a new Yemeni unity Government, supported by the international community, can be formed and begin the process of rebuilding the country's economy and State institutions.

I welcome the efforts of the World Bank and UNICEF to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis. The first disbursement of cash assistance to the most vulnerable Yemeni households took place on 20 August. The $400 million programme will reach all of its beneficiaries in the coming weeks and months. The programme is providing vital support to those households and is maintaining a critical safety-net system.

There are no winners on the battlefield in Yemen. The losers are the Yemeni people, for it is they who are suffering from this war. They are getting poorer while their influential leaders are getting richer. These leaders are not interested in finding solutions because in a settlement they will lose their power and control. Nevertheless, the parties have to commit to ending all hostilities and start discussions for a comprehensive peace agreement.

Common ground must be found in order to relieve the effects of conflict, hunger and disease and to increase mutual trust. An agreement that provides for secure access for humanitarian and commercial goods to reach Hudaydah and get distributed to the rest of the country, for the opening of the Sana'a airport and for ensuring more consistent civil-service salary payments will be an essential step in alleviating the humanitarian crisis. However, those steps cannot replace the broad solution we are trying to achieve, which will be a part of a larger comprehensive peace agreement.

To reach such a peace agreement, I held meetings with Yemeni and international officials during the opening week of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly in New York. I continue to be in communication with the parties. I am currently in the process of discussing a proposal that includes humanitarian initiatives to rebuild trust and steps to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. We will discuss the details of this proposal with the Government of Yemen and the alliance of the Houthis and General People's Congress, which have committed to engaging in further discussions on the details of the proposal. We hope that this commitment will translate into action by the parties and that it will deepen their engagement with me with respect to those initiatives, with a view to achieving a peaceful political solution.

The bloodshed and destruction in Yemen has to end. There are no excuses. There are no justifications. People are asking the United Nations to provide a solution for salary-payment issue while others are actively working to hinder talks on the issue as if they able ignore the fact that millions of Yemenis are suffering. Many of the powerful in Yemen benefit from the current conflict at a time when their citizens are facing the worst suffering in the history of the country.

At a time when the gap between the Yemeni people and those in power is growing, the people want this war to end. Yemeni young people, women and civil-society groups are calling for peace, stability and accountability for crimes committed. In the southern governorates, past injustices and calls for greater autonomy remain unaddressed despite the urgent need for them to be addressed. The Yemenis themselves are not without many positive ideas for tackling these issues in a peaceful manner, but the parties need to show greater flexibility and listen to the people. If they do not do so, the fissures in Yemen's political and social fabric will only become wider, thereby increasing the danger of further fragmentation and with it the potential for terrorism.

The United Nations is using all its political, logistical, administrative and advisory capabilities to support the Yemeni cause, but only the warring parties can decide to reach peace. They are the ones who will be held to account for a failure. I reiterate that the only viable path for the future of Yemen is a negotiated settlement. The proposals that I have put forward meet the concerns of both parties. Their implementation would bring real benefits to the Yemeni people.

Finally, I request the Security Council to use all its political and economic power it to apply pressure on all parties to commit to a path of peace. The parties must climb out of their trenches and put an end to hostile rhetoric. Instead of fighting over Yemen, let us cooperate for the best interests of Yemen.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ging.

Mr. Ging: Last month, Yemen entered the third year of its armed conflict with no clear end in sight. The human cost of this conflict has been devastating. Air strikes, shelling and ground fighting continue in urban areas, where civilians are being injured or killed and the critical infrastructure they rely on is being destroyed. The international community has witnessed the devastation in which the Yemeni people now live,

and because of the crisis approximately 15 million people lack adequate access to clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, or health services; and about 7 million people are faced with the threat of famine. Worse, all of this has been exacerbated by the largest single-year outbreak of cholera ever recorded. As the conflict continues, some 2 million people remain displaced. They live in crowded, unsafe, unsanitary and undignified spontaneous settlements, where shelters made of rags, cardboard and just about anything their residents can find in the streets are exposed to the elements. The conflict in Yemen remains a man-made crisis, generating intolerable suffering for the Yemeni people.

I take this opportunity to highlight three of the challenges facing the Yemeni people, and humanitarians in particular — humanitarian access and its limitations, the impact of civil-servant-salary interruptions on food insecurity and critical services, and the ongoing risks in commercial access to the country.

Humanitarians face unacceptable obstacles from all sides in carrying out relief efforts in Yemen. The biggest problem is actual prevention of humanitarian access. For example, the authorities in Sana'a regularly deny access and have arbitrarily delayed or denied dozens of requests for humanitarian personnel to enter the country via Sana'a. Furthermore, for several weeks now, humanitarian partners have been reporting a freeze on the issuance of visas by the authorities in Aden for international non-governmental organizations.

Such obstacles are abhorrent in a country where the threat of famine looms over millions, where there are over 800,000 suspected cases of cholera across 90 per cent of communities, and where only 45 per cent of health facilities are functioning. Quite simply, these obstructions cost lives. We hope that the recent commitments made by the parties will translate into giving priority to unfettered humanitarian access.

The interruption of regular salary payments for 1.25 million civil servants is an additional driver of humanitarian need, particularly food insecurity, as affected public employees and their families represent nearly a quarter of the population. Where food is available in markets, people now lack the cash to buy basic necessities. The prices have risen significantly. Recent market analysis puts the average price of a food basket 30 per cent higher than pre-crisis prices, and in some cases as much as 60 per cent higher, despite the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism's facilitating the majority of Yemen's average food requirements each month. The price of cooking gas in Aden and Hudaydah is more than 70 per cent higher than the pre-crisis level. That reality is having a negative effect on the capacity of the population to cope. People are now taking to such acts as selling their assets and taking on debt to buy food.

Children are paying a particularly high price, not least the 460,000 who are severely malnourished. Even if the fighting were to stop today, stunted growth and delayed cognitive development would linger for an entire generation. The loss of livelihoods for adults also means that thousands of children are forced to work rather than go to school, with child marriage rates also increasing as families claim incapacity to support their children.

In addtion, the lack of civil-servant salaries has disrupted the provision of basic services to the wider population. Already stressed critical services are unavailable if employees are not present to operate them, most notably in the health, water and sanitation and education sectors. We seek the support of the Council in finding a way to prioritize salaries for those sectors. It is not difficult to draw a clear link between the near-absent health, water and sanitation services and the unprecedented cholera outbreak.

As the Council is aware, Yemen has long been reliant on the importation of commercial goods to meet its basic food and fuel needs. However, commercial traffic to Yemen, by both sea and air, remains challenging. Any significant decline in imports due to bureaucratic delays risks making the threat of famine a reality. In that regard, we renew our calls for the protection and continued operation of Hudaydah port and for the unconditional instalment of the four World Food Programme mobile cranes. The closure of Sana'a airport to commercial traffic has blocked thousands of Yemenis from travelling for medical care, and students from attending universities abroad. A resumption of commercial flights is urgently and immediately needed. There appears to be no legitimate reason that the inspection mechanism operated by the coalition prior to August 2016 cannot be reinstated.

The Yemen humanitarian response plan is 55 per cent funded, with $1.3 billion of the $2.3 billion required to reach the 12 million people in need of humanitarian support and protection this year. We thank Member

States for their generosity and funding. Despite the complexity of the response, this year humanitarians have already reached 7 million people with direct assistance. We therefore encourage Member States to directly support our efforts and to do more through the response plan. This year, the Yemen Humanitarian Fund has reached $128 million, the largest globally. The Fund was nimble in rapidly responding to the cholera outbreak and famine prevention. Over 21 per cent of the Fund's allocations have gone to national partners. We salute them for their efforts on the front lines of the humanitarian response and, again, we thank donor Member States for their generosity.

As we desperately wait for a political solution and an end to the conflict, we call upon all States to exert their influence on all parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law and human rights law. The Human Rights Council's recent adoption by consensus of resolution 36/31 is one example of the influence States can exert. The parties and their supporters need to show greater commitment to finding a political solution. We need the international community to step up its efforts in support of a viable solution that addresses the root causes and restores the hope of the Yemeni people for a better future. They deserve nothing less.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ging for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and the Director of the Operational Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Ging, for their briefings. We express our full support for their work.

Despite the numerous pronouncements made by the Security Council on the situation in Yemen, including the presidential statements of 15 June (S/PRST/2017/7) and 9 August (S/PRST/2017/14), and in spite of the repeated calls that the Council has made to the parties with a view to their commitment to a cessation of hostilities and initiation of dialogue to achieve a political solution to the conflict, the situation in the country has not improved, and the humanitarian crisis unfortunately continues to worsen without signs of progress.

Aside from the conflict, which has generated nearly 3 million internally displaced persons, and has left 9.8 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, according to data published on 1 October by the World Health Organization, the cholera outbreak has spread to 96 per cent of governorates in Yemen, causing over 2,000 deaths and possibly infecting 750,000 people, a one third increase over the number reported at our previous briefing, in August (see S/PV.8027), where the figure was around 500,000 people.

Regrettably, the presence of armed groups, checkpoints and indiscriminate airstrikes, especially in the governorates of Al-Yauf, Marib, Sa'ada, Hudaydah and Sana'a, among others, continue to hamper the distribution and deployment of humanitarian assistance, not only because of the transit and transit restrictions that those entail, but because of the high risk that humanitarian workers are subjected to when entering those places, where they have been subject to attacks with firearms on a number of occasions, the origin of which should be a matter deserving of the careful attention by the Council. In that regard, we reiterate to the parties involved in the conflict that they must allow and guarantee the security and integrity of the agencies that provide humanitarian assistance. We also remind them that it is prohibited to identify such agencies as military targets by any reasoning. Moreover, they must ensure the unconditional and unrestricted access of aid to all places where it is needed.

With regard to the food shortage in Yemen, as reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations last September, 60 per cent of the population lives with food insecurity, and 7 million people are at risk of famine. This situation is aggravated by the fact that 90 per cent of the food staples required by the population to survive are imported. Furthermore, the ports that are currently providing services do not do so in full capacity and are not capable of meeting the demand. In that regard, we call on the parties to ensure the full operation of all ports and routes of access to the same, including the port of Hudaydah and Sana'a airport.

For all of those reasons, we reiterate our call on the Council and the membership in general to maintain a unanimous and firm position in condemning belligerent acts and campaigns that aggravate the crisis in Yemen and that generate the damaging instability that threatens the lives of millions of innocent people.

We also reiterate our call on the parties involved in the conflict to comply with the provisions of resolution 2216 (2015), to commit to a cessation of hostilities and to establish a sustained process of dialogue and negotiation that will allow for a peaceful, inclusive and orderly political transition that meets the demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people, and that is framed in respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Yemen.

Finally, we consider it important to reiterate the request made by the former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, to create an independent international body to investigate possible violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, thereby preventing impunity from silencing the voices of the thousands of victims that this conflict has claimed.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and to the representative of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Ging, for their briefings. We also thank the French presidency for convening this public briefing.

Uruguay sees no other way to arrive at a solution to the bloody conflict in Yemen except through a Yemeni-led negotiation process in which all parties involved participate in an inclusive, peaceful and democratic manner. There is no military solution to the conflict. Uruguay emphatically urges the parties to return to the negotiating table without preconditions and in good faith and to agree to put an end to the armed conflict in a peaceful way as quickly as possible. On a military basis, none of the contenders will prevail.

Uruguay also calls on the parties to the conflict to fully comply with the cessation of hostilities to facilitate negotiation and as a first step towards establishing peace. They should understand that, if the war were to continue, it would favour the actions of Al-Qaida and Da'esh. Furthermore, those countries that have influence on the parties must cooperate in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The lack of concrete results in the peace process continues to create suffering for Yemeni civilians, causing great harm every day to the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which is on the verge of collapse, which is aggravated by famine and the outbreak of cholera.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, Uruguay is concerned by the dire situation of civilians, in particular that of the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children. According to a recently published report by Yemen Protection Cluster, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, during the first half of 2017 the number of air attacks reported exceeded the total number of air attacks for all of 2016, with a monthly average almost three times greater for the present year. The same phenomenon applies to the data on armed clashes. Civilians are the ones paying the highest price for those acts — with their lives.

Uruguay condemns each and every violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that are taking place in Yemen. In that connection, we urge all parties to distinguish at all times between the civilian population and the combatants. Civilians are not a target, and humanitarian assistance must be allowed to reach them without restrictions or interruption.

My delegation has spoken on several occasions in the Council about the need for accountability for the serious widespread violations of international humanitarian law committed by all warring parties. We are pleased by the recent adoption by the Human Rights Council of a resolution that provides for the establishment of a panel of experts to monitor the situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses committed by all the parties to the conflict since September 2014. In that regard, Uruguay calls on the parties, in accordance with the provisions of that resolution, to provide full and transparent access to the international investigative committee and to cooperate with it so that it can fulfil its mandate.

All parties involved in this prolonged conflict have committed war crimes and other serious violations of international law — and continue to do so with total impunity. They must be held accountable before justice for their actions. Accountability is crucial to achieve a lasting settlement to the conflict.

Similarly, Uruguay welcomes and appreciates the annual report (S/2017/821) of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, as well as the inclusion in the attached list of perpetrators of serious violations against children in Yemen.

Finally, allow in particular to thank the Special Envoy for his work and reiterate our strong support to him. We are also grateful for the continuous work

carried out by humanitarian workers and agencies in Yemen, who are trying to help millions of persons under extremely difficult conditions.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I extend to the Security Council a greeting of peace on behalf of the people of Yemen, who aspire to peace.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your excellent leadership of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to express our great gratitude to you, Sir, for giving us this opportunity to speak before the Council today. We would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for the great efforts they are undertaking. The Yemeni Government fully supports their efforts aimed at achieving at a sustainable peace agreement that would put an end to the coup against the Yemeni State and end the war that has been waged by the Houthi-Saleh coalition against our people since September 2014.

The Council meets today two weeks after a great deal of activity at the United Nations following the opening of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. The Republic of Yemen participated in the opening of the session with a high-level delegation, led by His Excellency President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour. The meetings and dialogues held with various senior United Nations officials, as well as Security Council member States, with regard to the situation in Yemen were especially important. The primary message of those meetings can be summarized in the willingness of the Yemeni Government to immediately meet the requirements for sustainable peace and in order to put an end to the war in Yemen under the auspices of the United Nations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen.

However, we cannot put an end to the war and achieve peace unilaterally. On the contrary, putting an end to the war requires the acceptance by the coup party to return to the negotiating table and to accept the elements of peace, as well as the terms of reference, in order to put an end to the suffering of our patient Yemeni people.

The opening of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly coincided with the three-year anniversary of the war, which is being waged by the Houthi/Saleh coalition against the people of Yemen. The war runs contrary the national consensus, embodied in the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its means of implementation, and the outcomes of the National Dialogue for a peaceful political transition in Yemen, which was adopted under the auspices of the United Nations and with the blessing of the Security Council. The Security Council held an extraordinary meeting in Sana'a in January 2013 in order to support the aspirations of the Yemeni people towards building a democratic federation based on justice, equality, human rights and good governance.

Three years have passed since the Houthi/Saleh coup d'état — the greatest catastrophe ever witnessed by Yemen — began, and the miserable circumstances in my country are apparent. The coup has displaced millions of Yemeni people, inside and outside Yemen. It has killed tens of thousands of Yemeni citizens and it continues to indiscriminately shell the heroic city of Taiz. It has caused the spread of cholera and turned Sana'a into an enormous prison detaining thousands of Yemen's best citizens in terms of thinkers, academics, students and journalists, not to mention the fact that children are being recruited. The coup has demolished the homes of its opponents and has changed the educational curriculums in line with a narrow, dynastic, religious perspective that proclaims a divine right to govern the population without observance of the principles of democracy and pluralism in which we all believe.

Three years after the beginning of this human suffering, which is unprecedented in the history of Yemen, all observers can see that the Houthi/Saleh alliance is exploiting the security, stability, sovereignty and humanitarian situation in Yemen. The spread of health-related disasters is being used in a strategy of precariousness hatched by Tehran in the context of its expansionist view of the region and carried out with the Houthi tentacles in Yemen. In Yemen we can either accept the rule of the Houthi militias and the imposition of a Hizbullah-like model or face death and destruction. as well as the spread of instability and tension in the region.

The Houthi-Saleh alliance continues to usurp authority. According to the final report of the Panel of Experts established in accordance with resolution 2266 (2016), that alliance has looted 70 per cent of the State's resources (see S/2017/81). It rejects the peace initiatives that have been submitted and presented by

the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Yemen in Geneva and Kuwait, the most recent of which was the Hudaydah initiative, which was welcomed by the Yemeni Government and discussed in detail by the President during his meetings in New York. What cannot be disputed is that the Houthis do not have the political will to directly engage with the requirements for peace in Yemen. The political will of the Houthis is being held hostage by outside forces that do not hope for security and stability in Yemen or the region.

The Yemeni Government continues to believe that war cannot be the means by which the Yemeni crisis will be settled. As everyone knows, the Yemeni Government did not resort to taking up arms when the Houthi militias controlled Sana'a. The Government has made concessions in order to arrive at the controversial Peace and National Partnership Agreement, which was rejected by the party responsible for the coup. That party then hijacked the State, thinking that they would get away with it by killing the State's leadership and its opponents and burying the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the results of the National Dialogue Conference, which all Yemenis agreed to. The attendance and participation of the party that carried out the coup in all the rounds of negotiation in the past were simply maneuvers used in order to gain time and impose a criminal scheme that aims to destroy Yemen and assault neighbouring States. That is all within an agenda that is being carried out by Iran in order to spread tension and destabilize the region by creating tension and fabricating conflicts, which fuel sectarian violence and swell feelings of hatred. Such actions spread violence and chaos within the region.

Sustainable peace will not be achieved if Iran does not stop interfering in Yemen's affairs and in the affairs of the region. The world must today take a collective stand in order to reign in Iran's expansionist greed. The experience of the Ayatollah's oppressive regime, which was rejected by the Iranian people, cannot be imposed on Yemen. The terms of reference for peace in Yemen, which are embodied in the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, include the necessary elements to guarantee a sustainable solution to the Yemeni crisis. Moreover, resolution 2216 (2015) is gaining more strategic importance with time. The framework of reference for the international community is growing, along with the unified position of the Security Council regarding the Yemeni crisis. It strongly confirms that any sustainable solution to the Yemeni crisis can be based only on the withdrawal of the militias responsible for the coup and the return of power to the State, as well as the handing over of weapons and rockets of the State. Only the State should be in possession of weapons.

Before the General Assembly, President Hadi said that the rockets targeting the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as those that the militias have threatened to use against the territories of the United Arab Emirates, which have a range of over 600 kilometres, are Iranian rockets (see A/72/PV.11). He said that they are distinct from the rockets that are in the possession of the Yemeni army.

The Yemeni Government has limited capabilities and is undergoing a very complicated situation. Additionally, it faces great challenges in the economic, security and services sectors because of the war and the destruction that it has wrought on all facets of daily life. Yemen is in dire need of international assistance in order to support its own efforts to entrench peace and security and activate services in the liberated areas, commence reconstruction and remedy security breaches. It must also continue with its efforts to combat terrorism. Yemen continues to need support, due to the levels of poverty and the lack of food security, especially in areas that are being shelled on a daily basis by the militias, such as the besieged city of Taiz, which has been under siege for over two and a half years. In the governorates under control of the coup forces, there is a dire humanitarian situation, as a result of the rebels' refusal to pay wages to employees of the State in the sectors of health care and education. The militias continue to loot funds and resources from the customs and tax authorities. They continue to loot the reserves of the Central Bank in order to fund the so-called Houthi popular committees and war efforts. They continue to fully drain economic and financial institutions.

The role of the private sector has diminished and, in its place, a sector of war merchants has been created. That has been enabled by capital being gained during the war by people who are taking advantage of opportunities to rob humanitarian aid in order to traffic fuel and weapons, loot public funds and impose mafia-style protection tactics on normal citizens who are being deprived of their monthly wages. School curriculums have not been safe from the onslaught. They have been replaced by extremist, racist curriculums that encourage a culture of conflict, violence and religious

sectarianism, which represents a clear reproach to the rest of the world. The Yemeni Government calls upon the international community to pressure the rebels to accept the Hudaydah initiative of Mr. Cheikh Ould Ahmed. There must be further initiatives in order to build confidence and mobilize the resources of the State and transfer tax and customs revenues at the Hudaydah port to the branch of the Central Bank in Hudaydah, in coordination with the branch in Aden. The Government has also pledged to cover the deficit accrued from paying the salaries of civil servants, especially in major sectors, such as education and health care and areas under militia control.

Our people have not been paid in a year and the militias refuse to cooperate with the Yemeni Government, the Special Envoy or international organizations, such as the World Bank, to pay the wages of our people. Faced with such a catastrophic situation, we call upon Member States to shoulder the responsibilities of the Yemeni crisis by pressuring the rebel forces to implement Security Council resolutions and offering real concessions, so that Yemen can be spared from further bloodshed. We must work towards allowing access to humanitarian aid for all Yemenis living under the control of rebel forces.

The Yemeni Government is most concerned with alleviating the suffering of our people. The Yemeni Government has repeatedly expressed its readiness to reopen the airport in Sana'a to humanitarian flights, provided that the militias exit the airport and hand over management duties of the airport to the professional staff that ran it before September 2014, under the supervision of the United Nations. We could open the airport in Sana'a today if the militias abided by those conditions.

Dealing with the Yemeni crisis from a humanitarian perspective, despite its importance, without paying due attention to the political perspective or working towards arriving at a sustainable political solution to the Yemeni issue, is simply an exercise in damage control that would prolong the war and suffering caused by the coup carried out by the Houthi-Saleh militias. Therefore, the Security Council's serious desire to deal with the humanitarian situation in Yemen is being put to the test, because it must help deal with the root causes of the crisis, as opposed to just treating the symptoms.

In conclusion, we highly value the great efforts being exerted by the international community and the Ambassadors of the Group of 18 to achieve security and stability in Yemen. I take this opportunity to reiterate the call made by President Hadi to the friends of Yemen to resume their efforts to implement peace and reconstruction in the country. On behalf of Yemen, I would like to renew our thanks and appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as to the rest of the States of our coalition, for their efforts to restore legitimacy, security and stability in Yemen and aid its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.